

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

*or* AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



**December 2017**

**Vol. 122, No. 12**

**₹ 15.00**

# THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

## *Analysis of Vedanta Philosophy VI*

The last are the non-dualists. They raise the question also, that God must be both the material and the efficient cause of this universe. As such, God has become the whole of this universe and there is no going against it. And when these other people say that God is the soul, and the universe is the body, and the body is changing, but God is changeless, the non-dualists say, all this is nonsense. In that case what is the use of calling God the material cause of this universe? The material cause is the cause become effect; the effect is nothing but the cause in another form. Wherever you see an effect, it is the cause reproduced. If the universe is the effect, and the God the cause, it must be the reproduction of God. If you say that the universe is the body of God, and that the body becomes contracted and fine and becomes the cause, and out of that the universe is evolved, the non-dualists say that it is God Himself who has become this universe. Now comes a very fine question. If this God has become this universe, you and all these things are God. Certainly. This book is God, everything is God. My body is God, and my mind is God, and my soul is God. Then why are there so many Jivas? Has God become divided into millions of Jivas? Does that one God turn into millions of Jivas? Then how did it become so? How can that infinite power and substance, the one Being of the universe, become divided? It is impossible to divide infinity. How can that pure Being become this universe? If He



has become the universe, He is changeful, and if He is changeful, He is part of nature, and whatever is nature and changeful is born and dies. If our God is changeful, He must die some day. Again, how much of God has become this universe? If you say X (the unknown algebraical quantity), then God is God minus X now, and, therefore, not the same God as before this creation, because so much has become this universe. So the non-dualists say, 'This universe does not exist at all; it is all illusion. The whole of this universe, these Devas, gods, angels, and all the other beings born and dying, all this infinite number of souls coming up and going down, are all dreams.' There is no Jiva at all. How can there be many? It is the one Infinity. As the one sun, reflected on various pieces of water, appears to be many, and millions of globules of water reflect so many millions of suns, and in each globule will be a perfect image of the sun, yet there is only one sun, so are all these Jivas but reflections in different minds.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2015), 1.401-403.



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## **Contents**

Traditional Wisdom	775
This Month	776
<i>Editorial: The Inner Development</i>	777
About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita <i>Sarada Sarkar</i>	779
Elements in Sister Nivedita's Educational Vision <i>Vinayak Lohani</i>	788
Reflections on Hinduphobia: A Perspective from a Scholar-Practitioner <i>Jeffery D Long</i>	797
Gems of Memories: Reminiscences of Swami Saradeshnananda <i>Swami Shuklatmananda</i>	805
Balabodha: Samadhi	814
Traditional Tales: The Humbling of Hanuman	815
Reviews	817
Manana	819
Reports	821

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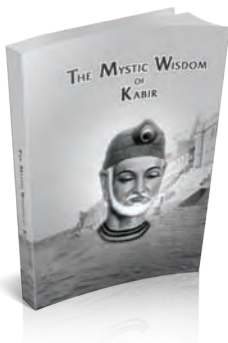
Goswami Tulasidas

*Dohavali* is an important work by the famous saint-poet Goswami Tulasidas. It is written in Awadhi language as two-lined verses named *dohas* and a few *sorathas*. It contains both spiritual and secular wisdoms with specific emphasis on the devotion to Sri Rama and chanting *Rama Nama*.



Pages 232 | Price ₹70  
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This book is an English translation of *Dohavali* by Swami Brahmeshananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order who is a former editor of *The Vedanta Kesari* and the author of many popular books. This book will help readers gain both secular and spiritual wisdom and enhance their devotion to Sri Rama drawing inspiration from Goswami Tulasidas.



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Swami Brahmeshananda

In Indian religious history, Kabir is unique. To the Hindus, he is a Vaishnava Bhakta, to the Muslims, a Pir, to the Sikhs, a Bhagat, to the Kabirpanthis, an Avatar, and to the modern patriots, he is a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity. He is seen as a promoter of universal religion who opposed superstitious beliefs and empty rituals.

This book is a compilation of Kabir's works—songs and verses—which are very popular with the masses and in religious circles. The English translation is rendered by Swami Brahmeshananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order. This selective compilation amply represents Kabir's ideology. The reader will find herein Kabir's message of knowledge, devotion, ethics, and social equality well expressed.



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### **The Universal Temple of Bhagwan Shri Ramakrishna (Under Construction) An earnest Appeal for generous donations**

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please accept our greetings and best wishes.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Aurangabad located on Swami Vivekananda Marg (Beed Bypass) is a branch center affiliated to Headquarters, Belur Math (near Kolkata). This ashrama is conducting various service activities in the field of health, education, child welfare, as well as spreading spiritual message of eternal religion as propounded by Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

This ashrama has taken up a new project of erecting a temple of Shri Ramakrishna. The work was commenced in December 2009 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

The temple will be a unique and imposing monumental structure of its kind in entire Marathwada region in general and Aurangabad city in particular. It will add a cultural and spiritual dimension to the historical city of Aurangabad. It will be a great attraction and a place for worship, prayer, meditation and inspiration for the local people. It is also expected that the good number of general public visiting Aurangabad city as tourists for visiting world heritage sites such as Ellora & Ajanta and pilgrims for visiting Ghrishneshwar Jyotirling, Shirdi, Paithan etc. will include visit to the temple in their itinerary. It is aimed for the benefit of one and all without distinction of caste, creed, and nationality.

The estimated cost of the entire project is Rs. 20 Crores. So far Rs. 15.00 Crores have been spent through public contribution. The balance amount of Rs. 05.00 Crores is needed to complete the construction of the Temple.

**We earnestly appeal to you to donate generously for this noble cause. Your support will indeed go a long way in our endeavor to erect this magnificent architectural edifice in the memory of Shri Ramakrishna who was the unique harmonizer of all the religions of the world and who dedicated his life to bring peace and welfare of mankind.**

**We value your help and co- operation immensely.**

Yours in the service of the Lord,

*Vishnupadananda*

**(Swami Vishnupadananda)  
Secretary**

**Temple Dimensions : Length: 156 ft. Breadth: 076 ft. Height: 100 ft.**  
**Temple Construction Area : 18000 Sq.ft.**  
**Garbhagriha : 24ft. x 24ft.**  
**Temple Hall for Prayer and Meditation : 70ft. x 40ft. Seating Capacity - 450**  
**Auditorium (Ground Floor) : 80ft. x 57ft. Seating Capacity - 500**  
**The entire Temple will be built in Chunar sandstone and interior in Ambaji and Makarana marble. Ceiling of the Temple Hall will be done in Teak Wood**  
**Estimated Cost : Rs. 20 Crores**



Model of the Proposed New Temple



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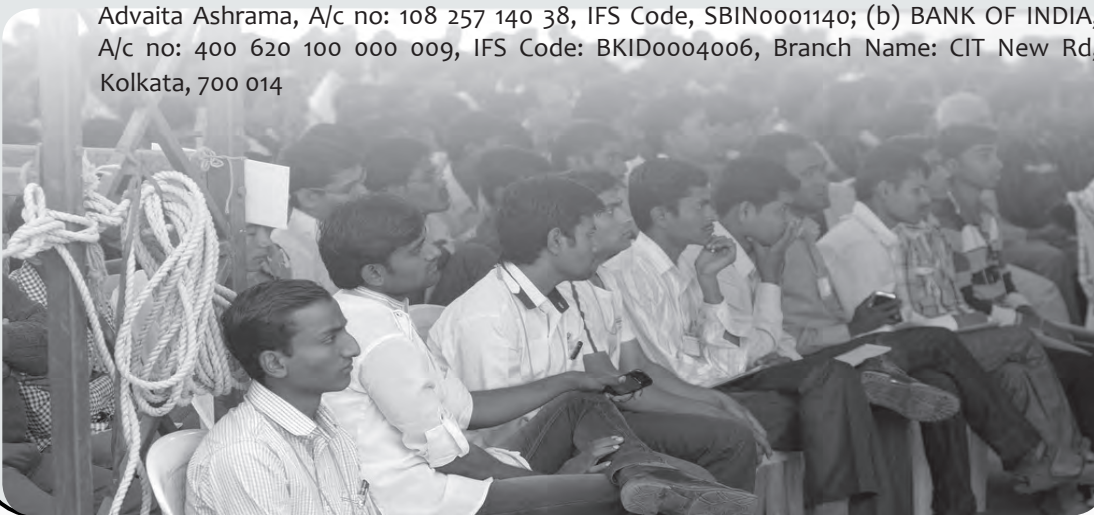
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# TRADITIONAL WISDOM

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

**Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!**

## Maitrayaniya Upanishad

December 2017  
Vol. 122, No. 12

### मैत्रायणीयोपनिषत्

अथापरं वेदितव्यमुत्तरो विकारोऽस्यात्मयज्ञस्य यथान्नमन्नादश्चेत्यस्योपव्याख्यानं । पुरुषश्चेता  
प्रधानान्तःस्थः स एव भोक्ता प्राकृतमन्नं भुङ्क्ता इति । तस्यायं भूतात्मा ह्यन्नमस्य कर्ता प्रधानः ।  
तस्मात् त्रिगुणं भोज्यं भोक्ता पुरुषोऽन्तःस्थः । अत्र दृष्टं नाम प्रत्ययं । यस्माद्वीजसम्भवा हि  
पशवस्तस्माद्वीजं भोज्यमनेनैव प्रधानस्य भोज्यत्वं व्याख्यातं । तस्माद्भोक्ता पुरुषो भोज्या प्रकृतिस्तत्स्थो  
भुङ्क्ता इति ।

॥६.१०॥

*Athaparam veditavyam-uttaro vikaro'syatma-yajnasya yathannam-annadash-chety-  
asyopavyakhyanam. Purushash-cheta pradhana-antah-sthah sa eva bhokta prakritam-annam  
bhunkta iti. Tasyayam bhutatma hyannamasya karta pradhanah. Tasmad trigunam bhojyam  
bhokta purusho'ntah-sthah. Atra drishtam nama pratyayam. Yasmad-bija sambhava hi pashavas-  
tasmad-bijam bhojyam-anenaiva pradhanasya bhojyatvam vyakhyatam. Tasmad-bhokta  
purusho bhojya prakritis-tatstho bhunkta iti* (6.10)

Now, there is something else to be known. There is a further development of this self-sacrifice, namely, what concerns the food and the eater thereof. The further explanation of this follows. The conscious person abides within nature and is the enjoyer for she or he enjoys the food of nature. This elemental self, indeed, is food for this person, its maker is nature. Therefore, that which is to be enjoyed consists of the three qualities and the enjoyer is the person who dwells within. Here the evidence is what is observed. Since animals spring from seed and as seed is food, by this is explained that nature is what is to be enjoyed. Therefore, the person is the enjoyer, nature is what is to be enjoyed. (6.10)



# THIS MONTH

**I**NNER DEVELOPMENT, concentration, repeated practice, *japa*, and meditation, and their effects are discussed in **The Inner Development**.

Sister Nivedita's life and teachings are remnants of a bygone era that beckons us to ignite our lives with at least an iota of inspiration that revolutionised that glorious life. Hers was an unbelievably active life and newer and newer material is being discovered even today, after 150 years of her birth. Sarada Sarkar, researcher and history teacher from Croydon, UK has relentlessly pursued all connections of Sister Nivedita and has established contact with her living relatives. To one such relative, Chris Orpen, she sent the January 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, which was focussed on the theme 'Sister Nivedita: Offered to India'. Orpen wrote to Sarada Sarkar with full of appreciation and also with rare archival material on and by Sister Nivedita. The third instalment of the facsimiles of that material and their transcription is being provided in **About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita**. These papers include three letters of Sister Nivedita written to her niece Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy.

Vinayak Lohani, founder of the NGO Parivaar, a humanitarian institution based in West Bengal, in **Elements in Sister Nivedita's Educational Vision** traces the development of educational ideas of Sister Nivedita, from the time she was a teacher in England to when she had blossomed into a visionary of national consciousness in India.

Jeffery D Long, Professor of Religion and

Asian Studies, Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania, USA, critiques Hinduphobia in **Reflections on Hinduphobia: A Perspective from a Scholar-Practitioner**. He focuses on Hindu-phobic *discourse*.

Swami Saradeshananda was an illumined beacon among the disciples of Sri Sarada Devi. His spiritual wisdom and insight have inspired the lives of countless spiritual aspirants. Swami Shuklatmananda, a monk at Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Haridwar, served Swami Saradeshananda for ten years from 1978 to 1988 in Vrindavan. He shares with the readers his precious and blissful experiences in the holy company of Swami Saradeshananda in the eighth and final instalment of **Gems of Memories: Reminiscences of Swami Saradeshananda**.

Many wonderful nuggets of wisdom contained in ancient scriptures are difficult to understand. In *Balabodha*, such ancient wisdom is made easy. This month's topic is **Samadhi**. Understanding this word is necessary to understand this spiritual attainment.

How pride can be a great problem is learnt from the story **The Humbling of Hanuman**. This story is this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Arulneri Kathaigal*.

Gary Marcus, Professor of Psychology and Neural Science, New York University and Jeremy Freeman, Neuroscientist, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, have edited the book **The Future of the Brain**. From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.



# *The Inner Development*

**H**OW DO WE GIVE our introduction as spiritual aspirants, as the followers of the ancient and glorious tradition of a particular faith? How do we introduce ourselves? Generally, many a time it is seen that people say: 'Oh! I visit this place of worship.' But, should that be how we introduce ourselves? Our introduction should be in a different manner, which should be reflected in our speech, in our behaviour, and in our conduct otherwise. We should conduct ourselves in such a manner that even interacting for a few minutes with us, the person who is interacting with us should have this question: 'Who is this person? Who is she or he, from where does such a person come in today's society where everyone is wrought with tension?' They should wonder that today, when everyone is generally frowning—though Swami Vivekananda said that long face is not because of religion but because of a stomach problem yet, many people keep their faces in such a contorted manner—so in this age, how is it that this person is speaking so pleasantly, having noble and high thoughts—that question should crop up in the mind of anyone who interacts with us for even a few minutes.

That would be our true introduction: that we belong to the ancient and holy lineage of a spiritual tradition. Merely saying that one goes to a particular place of worship or other religious place, or to merely say the name of one's spiritual guru would do us no good. Our actions should speak louder.

When one is caught up in activity, one feels that were there a chance, if one could get a day free to oneself, then one would definitely do so

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**You become angry, because you want to become angry.**

---

much of meditation that God would come and sit in one's front. But, when one gets some such leisure, one is freed of any such misjudgement about one's ability to do that. One understands that it is not so easy. Let alone bringing God in front of oneself, one is unable to bring one's mind to the place of meditation.

How to get concentration? This is a frequently asked question. Should we meditate to get concentration? Suppose you want to watch a match or a movie with concentration, what do you do? Do you meditate? No, because you automatically get concentrated, because you love it. How do you love it? Swamiji says that you start loving the thing that you repeat over and again. He says that a mother loves her child because she is seeing the face of the child since the birth of the child. Therefore, the secret of concentration is not to give up. That is the only secret of concentration, not to give up.

Similarly, in spiritual life, the mind may not come under our control, but that is because of us. You become angry, because you want to become angry. When our wants are not fulfilled, we become angry. Similarly, our mind goes out of our control because of our desires. And, what is the method to bring it back? The mind

becomes restless not because of a single desire but because of countless desires, which have been repeatedly thought about. If one wants to get rid of these desires, one has to think about God again and again.

All conceptions of heaven and hell have come from the daily experiences of different human beings. When you go to a slum and see the inhuman conditions in which the people live there, it is indeed a hellish experience. When you see people content and living comfortably, that is indeed a heavenly experience. Similarly, the scriptures talk about meritorious actions bringing about heaven and evil actions bringing about hell. Hell and heaven are there in this very world. If a person continues in spiritual life and dies without attaining the ultimate Truth, or realising the Self or God, that person would first experience fruits of one's actions that were performed in this world. Once the effects of the actions of that person are exhausted that person would take birth again in this world. Only this time, the house would be prosperous and ennobling. That person would be born probably in a house of religious minded people and would get an atmosphere for spiritual growth.

No spiritual practice would get lost, all spiritual practice comes with an assurance of warranty that nothing would get lost. Even if the spiritual aspirant dies without attaining the final goal of God realisation, she or he would have to continue from where one left in the previous lifetime. The person would have an undercurrent of spirituality and would understand that this world is unreal and would not crave for worldly pleasures. That person would be performing spiritual practices from an early age and would be interested only in matters relating to spirituality or God.

The spiritual aspirant would suddenly understand that this world is of no use, one would

understand that God realisation is the goal of human life. One would not get all the other knowledge or the memory of the previous lifetime; one would not remember the mundane details. One would only get spiritual knowledge and wisdom from the previous lifetimes. At whatever stage of spiritual growth one was in the previous lifetime, one would continue from there.

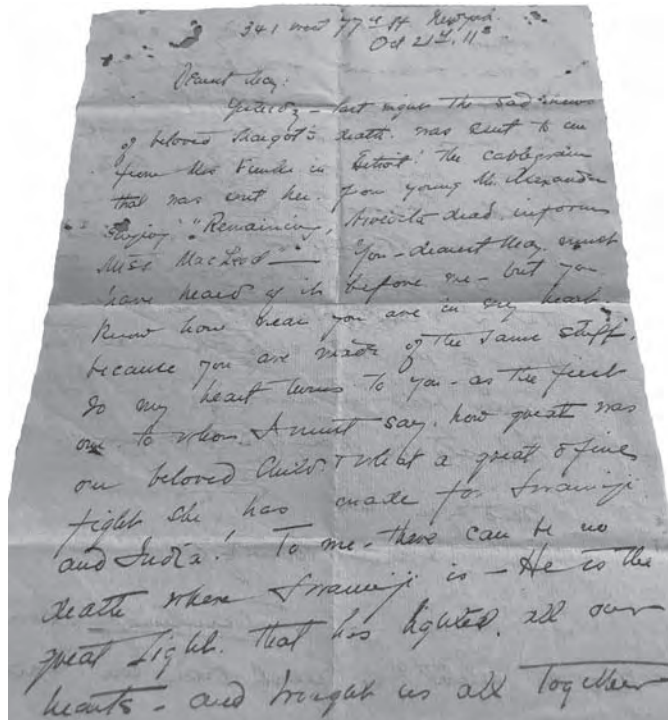
We have to remember that we have to have devotion to God, we have to surrender to God, and at the same time we have to be mercilessly ruthless with our mind. The mind is like a monkey. Whatever you tell it, it will jump from one place to the other. The mind can be also like a dog. It is difficult to train a dog. If it obeys, you reward it, else you punish it. The same way we have to give training to our mind. It is only by constant disciplining that the mind can be trained to obey oneself and only a trained mind can be a good instrument in spiritual life.

You tell the mind: 'Now, this is the time for meditation. You have to sit and meditate.' The mind has to listen. If you want to wake up early in the morning, you have to say to the mind, get up at such a time and without any alarm or any other help, the mind would wake you up. That training of the mind we have to give and if we continue our spiritual practices then there is no cause for worry because there is good news. The good news is that though there are many incurable ailments, there is cure for this bondage of transmigration, *bhava bandhana*. Sri Krishna found it out, Buddha found it out, and in this age, Sri Ramakrishna found it out. Let us pray to God to give us enough faith and strength so that we can in this very life attain God realisation and if that is not possible, continue our struggle from this lifetime till we actually attain it.



# About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita

Sarada Sarkar



Page 1

Letter of Josephine MacLeod to May Wilson, Dated 21 October 1911

ON 4 JULY 2017, Chris Orpen sent me a parcel of Sister Nivedita's family papers. The first instalment of this collection I had put together and it was published in the October 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* as 'Sister Nivedita's Unpublished Letter and Family Papers'.<sup>1</sup> The second instalment was published in the November 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* as 'On and About Sister Nivedita and Her Family'.<sup>2</sup> This is the third instalment of the papers.

Josephine MacLeod, Swami Vivekananda's disciple and friend wrote this letter to Sister

Nivedita's sister Mary or May Wilson just after Sister Nivedita's passing away:

[Page 1]

341 West 77th St. New York

Oct 21st. [19]11.

Dearest May,

Yesterday—last night the sad news of beloved Margot's death was sent to me from Mrs Funke in Detroit! The cablegram that was sent her from young Mr. Alexander saying 'Remaining,

"Precious May. let us be worthy of it all.  
 of Him - of Margot - of the privilege of  
 it all. I am sorry not to be with  
 you now - you need a loving embrace  
 for you have to sustain your little  
 world. Precious May. let me hear  
 from you - I know that no one cares  
 for you more than I - and  
 that I want you to turn to me -  
 each of us need each other - in this  
 sudden readjustment of our lives.  
 - Blessed be Margot - & Swamiji.  
 and you all  
 Ever lovingly  
 Tantine. for  
 this is what you must call me now

Page 2

Letter of Josephine MacLeod to May Wilson,  
 Dated 21 October 1911

Nivedita dead. Inform Miss MacLeod. You,  
 dearest May, must have heard of it before me,  
 but you know how near you are in my heart,  
 because you are made of the same stuff. So my  
 heart turns to you, as the first one to whom  
 I must say how great was our beloved Child  
 and what a great ofine fight she has made for  
 Swamiji and India! To me, there can be no  
 death where Swamiji is—He is the great Light  
 that has lighted all our hearts, and brought us  
 all together.

[Page 2]

Dearest May, let us be worthy of it all—of  
 Him—of Margot—of the privilege of it all. I  
 am sorry not to be with you now. You need a  
 loving embrace for you have to sustain your lit-  
 tle world. Precious May, let me hear from you  
 and know that no one cares for you more than  
 do I, and that I want you to turn to me—each  
 of us need each other in this sudden readjust-  
 ment of our lives.

Blessed be Margot of Swamiji and you all

Mastieken  
 Buitekant St.  
 Swellendam. 6740  
 13.5.78.  
 My dear Isabel.  
 I do feel ashamed that I have not written this  
 year - BUT - do you ever find that with a pleth-  
 ora of letters that you must answer, that the one  
 you would like to reply to most, is the one you  
 put off because you do not  
 want to write a cursory letter.  
 But be sure must not set to day  
 before I (at least) start writing to  
 you.  
 I really do not know where  
 to start. I feel that Mother denied  
 a great deal of her childhood -  
 and in all my life, I have NEVER  
 heard of her having lived in  
 Lancashire before my father went  
 to Manchester to transfer his  
 business from Bradford. I do know that  
 Mother married my father at Wundleton -  
 but that my work in Locking.

Page 1

Letter of Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy to  
 Isabel Noble, Dated 13 May 1978

Ever lovingly

Tantine—for this is what you must call me now.

Sister Nivedita's sister Mary or May Wilson  
 had a daughter named Ruth Olave Wilson aka  
 Grancy, who wrote the following letter to Isabel  
 Noble, daughter of Richmond Noble, Sister Ni-  
 vedita's brother:

[Page 1]

Mastieken

Buitekant St.

Swellendam 6740

13.5.78

My dear Isabel,

I do feel ashamed that I have not written this  
 year—BUT—do you ever find that with a pleth-  
 ora of letters that you must answer, that the one  
 you would like to reply to most, is the one you



Mother - when I asked questions -  
 always said that Aunt Margaret  
 begged that no publicity should  
 be given about their childhood.  
 I was always given to understand  
 that grandfather Noble was sent to  
 Oxford from the linen firm, because  
 a) of his strong religious feelings  
 that he wanted to give out and help  
 other people, and  
 b) that he had an outstanding  
 speaking voice that carried the  
 community with him,  
 and that the linen firm  
 financed him.  
 However, I am in a complete  
 maze now. I am sending you  
 all the photographs (relevant ones)  
 and some letters.  
 Are you sincerely interested in  
 the life & works of Aunt Margaret  
 or does your interest lie rather  
 with the family?  
 With these things, I am sending  
 the front of an 1875 Bible

Page 2

Letter of Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy to  
 Isabel Noble, Dated 13 May 1978

put off because you do not want to write a cursory letter. But the sun must not set today before I (at least) start writing to you.

I really do not know where to start. I feel that Mother *denied* a great deal of her childhood—and, in all my life, I have NEVER heard of her having lived in Lancashire before my father went to Manchester to transfer his business from Bradford. I do not know that Mother married my father at Wimbledon, but that they met in Yorkshire

[Page 2]

Mother—when I asked questions—always said that Aunt Margaret begged that no publicity should be given about their childhood. I was always given to understand that grandfather Noble was sent to *Oxford* from the linen firm, because

- a) of his strong religious feelings that he wanted to give out and help other people, and

sends you some data—and is  
 very precious. I think it should  
 be enclosed in two-sided  
 glass.  
 Yes, Aunt Margaret did live for  
 some time with the family in  
 Ireland and absorbed much more  
 than they realised.  
 Personally, I think it over-affected  
 her intelligence and emotion,  
 and that from that time on,  
 she was never really one of us—it  
 was as if she was on a higher plane  
 of evolution. My Mother sanctified  
 her and brought me up to  
 be up to where she went.  
 I have really had to come to  
 grips with <sup>these</sup> since, since you are  
 so demanding!!  
 Much love etc. Love Ruth G.  
 We were all in awe of  
 her & my sister - who turned  
 against anything to do with  
 "Irishness" when she came out -  
 although Uncle Basil was her  
 Godfather. A lot of S. H. means

Page 3

- b) that he had an outstanding speaking voice that carried the community with him, and that the linen firm financed him!

However I am in a complete maze now. I am sending you all the photographs (relevant ones) and some letters. Are you *sincerely* interested in the works of Aunt Margaret or does your interest lie rather with the family?

With these things, I am sending the front of an 1875 Bible

[Page 3]

which gives some data—and is very precious. I think it should be enclosed in two-sided glass.

Yes, Aunt Margaret did live for some time with the family in Ireland and absorbed much more than they realised.

Personally, I think it over-affected her intelligence and *emotion*, and that, from that time on, she was never *really* one of us—it was as if she was on a higher plane of evolution. My Mother sanctified her and brought me up to

despise Indians, as, originally, they were more  
 or less slave labour. However, there is a large  
 intellectual community in Natal. And they give  
 some excellent programmes on Rama-krishna  
 and Swami Vivekananda etc.  
 I have Samiji [sic] Vivekananda's will—he  
 left the residue of his estate to be divided be-  
 tween Aunt Margaret, Sarah Ole Bull,  
 and Frances Leggett; Aunt Margaret to be executive.  
 All the money was used to further Indian  
 emancipation. I also have all the obituaries  
 on Nivedita and Uncle Bose  
 (whom I admired and who adored me)  
 used to call me "his little  
 pet"; and I have beautiful  
 letters written to me as a  
 small child from Aunt Margaret.  
 Today (it is raining, so I am  
 inside) I am going to start on  
 Nivedita's "Sermons for Children".  
 They may be outdated, I do not

Page 4

Letter of Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy to  
 Isabel Noble, Dated 13 May 1978

revere her greatly, I have really had to come  
 to grips with things since, since you are so de-  
 manding !!

Much time etc was lost as we were all in awe  
 of Margot (My Sister)—who turned against  
 anything to do with 'Indians' When she came  
 out—although Uncle Bose was her Godfather.  
 A lot of South Africans

[Page 4]

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 or less slave labour. However, there is a large in-  
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 Nivedita and Uncle Bose (whom I admired and

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 child from Aunt Margaret. Today (it is raining  
 so I am inside) I am going to start on Nivedita's  
 'Sermons for Children'. They may be outdated,  
 I do not  
 know but if they are interesting, and also many  
 of my private letters—Barbara Foxe might be  
 interested.  
 I find I cannot do too much a day, as it all  
 upsets me to think how much I could have  
 helped Mother if I had known more, and I find  
 myself living in the past, which is not quite fair  
 to my beloved Walter, who is kindness itself, but  
 thinks, 'I should forget it!'  
 I think all family history should end up  
 with you, you know more than anyone, but you  
 ought to get out a family tree.  
 Are Alice and George Baker still alive? I  
 need to think him so romantic because he had

Page 5

he adored me) used to call me 'his little pet', and  
 I have beautiful letters written to me as a small  
 child from Aunt Margaret. Today (it is raining  
 so I am inside) I am going to start on Nivedita's  
 'Sermons for Children'. They may be outdated,  
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[Page 5]

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Are Alice and George Baker still alive? I  
 need to think him so romantic because he had

me, and, to the end of her days, she never went to the theatre because her father taught her that there was a place in the theatre called the 'Pit' and that led directly to the devil.

However she used to hire a car twice a week and we went to the cinema, complete with hot-water bottles and rugs! Those were the days when Uncle Dick was General Manager for Dunlops. He always left half-a-crown over the window ledge for me. I was never so spoiled either before or after!!!

Then there was 'Consui May'. She must have been a daughter of some sister of Aunt Betty's. She lived in Manchester and was a drip! Her husband deserted and went to America — one daughter Maria who was a bit like a sweet dumpling and took up nursing. They lived with her husband's family — one sister

Page 6

Letter of Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy to  
Isabel Noble, Dated 13 May 1978

lost his leg in the Great War!

Do you remember Aunt Betty and Uncle Dick? I stayed with them for about 4 months at the end of the war. They were so good to

[Page 6]

me, and, to the end of her days, she never went to the theatre because her father taught her that there was a place in the theatre called the 'Pit', and that led directly to the devil.

However she used to hire a car twice a week and we went to the cinema, complete with hot-water bottles and rugs! Those were the days when Uncle Dick was General Manager for Dunlops. He always left half-a-crown over the window ledge for me. I was never so spoiled either before or after!!!

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The old Mother was stone deaf and had an ear-trumpet phone about the size of an H M Voice Horn — I used to be terrified!

I am so glad you have met up with Alice Packard — it sounds fantastic —

I know nothing of your dear husband — tell me. I turned up your wedding photographs — you had an almost grown up stepdaughter 'Nancy' — tell me all — I know you lost Sarah — and then there was Selenda — but that is all I know.

You will see, in the photographs, that they are all 'Belfast' but there is one from Oldham. I also have copies of grandfather's notes and granny's death certificates — what do you want — you are welcome to anything except my

Page 7

dumpling and took up nursing. They lived with her husband's family—one sister

[Page 7]

was a teacher & I think, more or less supported the family and an allowance from Aunt Betty.

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You will see, in the photographs, that they are all 'Belfast' but there is one from Oldham. I also have copies of grandfather's notes and granny's death certificates—what do you want—you are welcome to anything except my



Dear Grancy,  
 I have a letter from Har-  
 rap & Co. authorizing Aunt Margaret to write  
 the Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> I  
 think I will get Walter to photostat it for you.  
 Do you have maple trees in Vermont?  
 And how come you have such a gorgeous  
 address as "Sleepers Hollow"—it sounds like  
 an old railway station in Devonshire!  
 All love to you and please forgive the hand-  
 writing as I have arthritic hands, now cold damp  
 they are much worse. That is why I cannot  
 play the piano any more. I am very sad  
 about your sight—you will have to discipline  
 your reading time—  
 Again love  
 Grancy

Page 8

Letter of Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy to  
 Isabel Noble, Dated 13 May 1978

[Page 8]

very special letters from Uncle Bose, Aunt Margaret, Aunt Abala (Lady Bose etc.)

Did I tell you that I have a letter from Har-  
 rap & Co. authorizing Aunt Margaret to write  
 the Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> I  
 think I will get Walter to photostat it for you.

Do you have maple trees in Vermont? And  
 how come you have such a gorgeous address as  
 'Sleepers Hollow'—it sounds like an old railway  
 station in Devonshire!

All love to you and please forgive the hand-  
 writing as I have arthritic hands, and now cold  
 damp they are much worse. That is why I can-  
 not play the piano any more. I am very sad  
 about your sight—you will have to discipline  
 your reading time.

Again love,  
 Grancy

11.8.1909. Calcutta.  
 My darling Grancy.  
 Merry Xmas and  
 kiss! Are you  
 still my naughty  
 little darling? Do  
 you still sit in a high  
 chair? Auntie does  
 want to see you so

Page 1

Your loving  
 Auntie.

Page 2

Letter of Sister Nivedita to Ruth Olave Wilson  
 aka Grancy, Dated August 1909

Three of the Sister Nivedita's letters that  
 Grancy mentions in her above letter are given  
 below. It is notable that Nivedita has written in  
 a handwriting that can be easily read by a child  
 that Grancy was at that time. Nivedita signs a  
 letter as 'Atty', which is how Grancy used to call  
 her, a childish expression of 'aunty'.

1

[Page 1]

[Unclear] 8.1909. Calcutta.

My darling Grancy,

[Unclear] merry Xmas and [unclear] kiss!  
 Are you still my naughty little darling? Do you  
 still sit in a high chair? Auntie does want to see  
 you soon.



April 14, 1910.

My beloved Grancy,  
 How do you do? Dear!  
 I see you! Little strawberry  
 jam cheeks! Does Daddy  
 let you sit beside him  
 now at table? And are  
 you good about pudding?  
 If I came to the door,  
 would you give me a hug  
 and a kiss? Uncle Bose  
 never forgets our wicked

Page 1

Letter of Sister Nivedita to Ruth Olave Wilson  
 aka Grancy, Dated 14 April 1910

[Page 2]

Your loving  
 Auntie

2

[Page 1]

April 14, 1910

My beloved Grancy,

How do you do? Dear! I see you! Little  
 strawberry jam cheeks! Does Daddy let you  
 sit beside him now at table? And are you good  
 about pudding? If came to the door, would you  
 give me a hug and a kiss? Uncle Bose never for-  
 gets our wicked

[Page 2]

darling Grancy. He sends his love every week.

With kisses and kisses and kisses,  
 Atty.

darting Grancy. He sends  
 his love every week.  
 With kisses and kisses and  
 kisses  
 Atty.

Page 2

Letter of Sister Nivedita to Ruth Olave Wilson  
 aka Grancy, Dated 14 April 1910

3

[Page 1]

My darling Grancy,

I am going to town to post this letter to you.  
 I have put kisses into it. When you open it, they  
 will all fly out of it to you. Kisses have wings.  
 They fly home to your heart. Do you like these  
 little birds?

XX

Your own loving  
 Ah-Oh!

Isabel replied to the letter she received from  
 Grancy as given below:

[Page 1]

A very happy Christmas to you.

Newburg, Vermont 05051

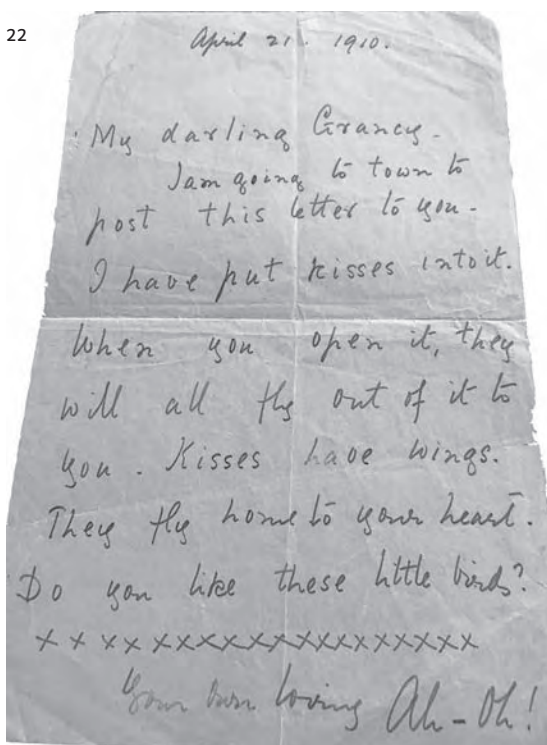
Area Code 802

866-5676

Sleepers Meadow

My dear Grancy,

It was lovely to get a letter from you—I was  
 worried at not hearing. I wondered if you were  
 ill, would anyone write and let me know! I'm



Page 1

Letter of Sister Nivedita to Ruth Olave Wilson  
aka Grancy, Dated 21 April 1910

afraid it is an effort for you to write but I do entreat you to make that effort somehow even if you have to dictate a letter. You are the only link to correct some of the inaccuracies that have cropped up in the accounts of our grandparents' lives!

I have found this mistakes in every biography of aunt Margot. I found one book about her called *The Dedicated* by Lizelle Redmond [sic].

To begin with: 1. It states great grandfather Rev John Noble was born in 1825.

Correction: My father told me he was born in 1798 which fits in with subsequent data.

2. The most idiotic account of aunt Betty's father, Richard Hamilton working all his life for the 'Irish Cause'; Margot going on rounds with him peddling a clandestine paper inciting rebellion.

This I find impossible to swallow.

3. It speaks of our grandfather leaving his employment near at hand because of moral scruples but returning after his mother persuaded him to.

There is a basis of truth here. Your mother told me that when Samuel Noble lost his father, he was 15 and he was apprenticed to some distant relatives but they lived a considerable distance off, in Lo'Down. He did leave them because he disapproved of their business methods and walked home many miles. He was barefoot when he reached home. She did not say he went back. She *did* tell me that by the time he wanted to go into the Church, the Church of Ireland did not give him any assistance; that was why he went into the Congregational Church—they helped with his education.

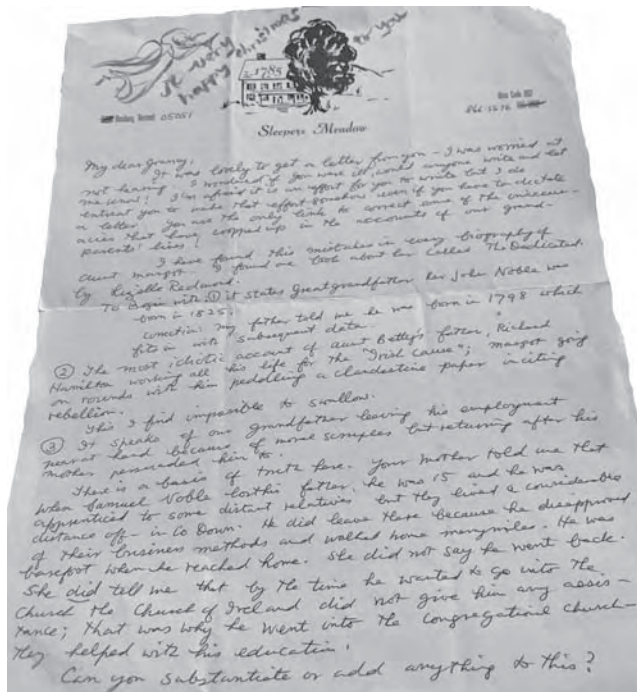
Can you substantiate or add anything to this?

[Page 2]

We have just had our first snow—winter is coming but up till now, except for one frost the weather has been extremely mild and we are lucky, saving fuel.

I saw William and Christine briefly in September. They had a wonderful holiday in the Canadian Rockies and in Arizona, then finished in Virginia at Christine's niece's wedding. I flew down there to attend the wedding and visit them. It was a delightful holiday, but as always I was very glad to get home. I love my home and having Selenda so close—upstairs. And Ryan who is still at school.

Our big news this fall is that Selenda finally got her teaching job. She has been librarian at the elementary school for 3 years, signing on each year rather than apply elsewhere, in the hope of getting a staff post at the school. But financially it was very tough as the librarian position was of an aide only and had no medical benefits. One cannot afford hospital and medical these days except in group plans. So we are all very happy now. John is on a college-work



*Letter of Isabel Noble to Ruth Olave Wilson aka  
Grancy, Dated 13 May 1978*

cooperative plan; he worked all summer, still does and returns to college January—computer programming.





## ***Elements in Sister Nivedita's Educational Vision***

**Vinayak Lohani**

will. For Indians, who had a well-established 'family ideal', she thought education had to play a role in expanding the ideal to the level of identification with the entire nation, and consequently, humanity at large.

### ***Nivedita in England— An Educationist in Making***

Immediately after completing her formal education at the age of seventeen from the Crossley Heath Orphan Home and School at Halifax, Nivedita, born Margaret Noble, began to work as a teacher in Keswick in the Lake district in North England. She then moved to Rugby and taught in an orphanage, and from there moved to Wrexham, where, along with teaching, she also enrolled as volunteer with Church of St Mark. She had an enriching experience in Wrexham, where she also gained confidence as a writer, writing on questions of social and public interest. Following this, she spent about two years in Chester, after which she moved to London on the offer of heading a school in Wimbledon started by Madam de Leeuw. Eventually Nivedita started her own School—the Ruskin School—in Wimbledon. This phase in Nivedita's life was the time when her ideas on education first took shape. These were the years when new ideas and developments in education, particularly early childhood education, began to

**T**HIS PAPER TRACES the development of educational ideas of Sister Nivedita, from the time she was a teacher in England to when she had blossomed into a visionary of national consciousness in India. It traces the influence of the ideas of Western educationists like Pestalozzi and Froebel on her, and how in the light of the new direction her life got through Swami Vivekananda, and with the added exposure of Indian society, she applied them to her work in India. The paper highlights some key elements and thrusts in Nivedita's educational vision—like mass education, women's education, manual and technical education, and most importantly, Education in 'Nationality' or National Consciousness. To her, educating the countrymen was the duty most sacred, and education's goal was primarily social and directed towards expanding the consciousness of a person, while bringing about a purification of one's heart and



take currency in Britain, as indeed in the whole of the West, and came to be known as the New Education Movement.

### ***Influence of Pestalozzi-Froebel Ideas on Nivedita***

The patron saints of this New Education Movement were the Swiss educationist Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827) and his German disciple Fredrich Froebel (1782–1852). Pestalozzi had keenly felt the need to take education to the poor masses. He lived a great part of his life in poverty, teaching at small schools, mostly with the underprivileged classes. He once took a role in an orphanage where he was involved in caretaking of the children under him. There he got the opportunity to intensely study various aspects of their behaviour. He came to believe that an effective way of making a child learn was to reduce knowledge to its elements and construct a series of psychologically ordered exercises. The basis of his theory was a close interconnection between psychology and learning. He believed that any abstract thought had to be gathered from concrete sensory experience.<sup>1</sup> Thus, all knowledge began in the sensual perception and moved towards the abstract. This later became a mantra for Nivedita in all spheres of knowledge, that a human being moves from 'the familiar to the unfamiliar', and 'concrete to the abstract', and informed not just her ideas on education but learning and development in any sphere, including religion and spirituality.

When Pestalozzi began to codify what he considered as laws of learning, his influence began to spread. Among those influenced was the German educationist Froebel, who in 1840 coined the word 'kindergarten', thus, laying the foundation of early child education system prevalent even now. While Pestalozzi worked mostly in the realm of ideas, Froebel was a

great innovator in design. Based on the principles he had absorbed from Pestalozzi, and extended by himself, he designed early childhood educational material known as 'Froebel Gifts', which were essentially building blocks of different shapes with coloured balls, and could be effectively used for elementary arithmetic and geometry. Advancing on Pestalozzi's ideas of learning through the concrete, Froebel based his educational system on activity. He observed that the child was most at ease while at play and thus to them all 'work' had to be presented in form of play. It is through play that a child enters into relationships with the external world. The 'game' was to be the central ingredient in Froebel's scheme of things.

The ideas of Pestalozzi and innovations of Froebel began to spread far and wide and the first kindergarten in the US started in the 1850s. In many other parts of Europe the concept was tried. Pestalozzi-Froebel House in Germany was one of the first influential institutions of early childhood teacher training, founded by a Germany lady, Henriette Schrader-Breymann, Froebel's disciple and grand-niece, in 1882. The institute based itself on Pestalozzi-Froebelian idea of 'learning by doing', but did not restrict themselves to the Froebelian apparatus and used themes from nature as well as domestic work. This also led to a wider professionalisation of early childhood education, particularly among women who took lead in taking up a trained career in child education. Those trained at this institute took these ideas to different parts of the world. A wider democratisation of education also followed, reaching the poorer sections, as a result of the adaptations in Froebelian design of the 'kindergarten', in different parts of Europe and America.<sup>2</sup> Any imaginative educationist in the West during that time would take serious note of these developments.

This was the scenario when Nivedita began her career as a teacher and later as an experimental educationist in the second half of the 1880s. It was when she was conducting her own school in Wimbledon that she came in touch with Ebenezer Cooke, a disciple of Ruskin and an influential lithographer and art educationist of the time, who was known to have considerable reputation as an educational thinker based on the ideas of Pestalozzi and Froebel. It was he who introduced her to the intellectual circle in London known as the Sesame Club, which had, among others, Lady Ripon, Lady Margesson, and Ronald McNeill as the key members, and where stalwarts like Thomas Huxley and George Bernard Shaw used to speak. Intellectually stimulated by this company, Nivedita began to write articles and participate in discussions on new trends in education, especially early childhood education, and developed a good name in this field as a bright thinker-practitioner. It was through her association with Sesame Club that she eventually met Swami Vivekananda in November 1895.

### **Starting off in India**

Upon her advent in India in January 1898, Nivedita did not start any concrete work immediately. A Pestalozzian in her knew it well enough that education evolves from the familiar to the unfamiliar. So in order to devise any system for education of Indian girls or plans for Indian women, she had to first familiarise herself with the ethos of the land which could help her arrive at possible bases for the girls in their educational journey. And Swamiji himself had imprinted upon her clearly enough that any educational method in India for Indian women had to be in consonance with the Indian ethos. Thus, she first had to undergo training in steeping herself in the spirit of India. And who could be a better master

for her than Swamiji! We know that for first nine months after her arrival in India she spent the first three and a half in Calcutta, getting precious lessons from Swamiji, and meeting some socially and intellectually influential persons. She also spent time in visiting existing educational endeavours like the Mahakali Pathshala in Calcutta founded by Mataji Maharani, a Maharratta woman, the Brahmo Samaj School, the Bethune College, as well as, and more importantly, enriching herself with exposure to traditional ways of Hindu life as seen in the lives of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and her companions like *Gopaler Ma*—Gopal's Mother. From May till October she spent about five months in the company of Swamiji, along with Josephine MacLeod and Sara Bull, visiting many different places like the Kumaon hills—Nainital and Almora—Punjab, and Kashmir. The treasure of experience she got from this time is well described by her in her most important works *The Master As I Saw Him* and *Notes on Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda*. Returning from there she was set to embark upon a new journey. Inaugurated by Holy Mother Sarada Devi, and in the presence of Swamiji and Swami Brahmananda, Nivedita's small school for girls started on the Kali Puja, Deepavali day on 13 November 1898.<sup>3</sup>

While handling small girls and trying to formulate a good model for early childhood learning, Nivedita felt that there could not be any rigidity in applying the concept of the Froebelian kindergarten or its European equivalents in India. It was conceived in a certain context pertaining to Germany and the difference in detailing was inevitable. In fact she thought that the Indian village with a range of early occupations and tools offers the best setting for the Indian equivalent of a kindergarten.<sup>4</sup> But she held on to the basic Pestalozzian principle that all learning

must proceed from the concrete. She writes: 'It is a law which cannot be too deeply understood and believed by the teacher, that thought proceeds from concrete to abstract, that knowledge grows by experience, and that experience begins with senses, that two senses are more than twice as good a foundation as one. Therefore where we want the young mind to acquire a new kind of knowledge, we have always first to sit down and consider: How can we make this subject concrete? How can we bring it home to sensation?'<sup>5</sup>

### ***Education as Training of Will, Feelings, and Choices***

Just like Swamiji who emphasised that all power comes from heart, and before that even intellectual equipment is a mere superficiality, in Nivedita's view too education first and foremost concerned itself with training of a person in feelings and choices. 'Unless we train the *feelings* and the *choice*, our man is not educated. He is only decked out in certain intellectual tricks that he has learnt to perform. By these tricks he can earn his bread. He cannot appeal to the heart, or give life.'<sup>6</sup>

Nivedita believed that throughout the early years of education there was nothing more important than the training of feelings. 'To feel nobly, and to choose loftily and honestly, is a thousand-fold more important to the development of faculty than any other single aspect of the educational process' (ibid.). To her, education concerns with man as a moral being and is primarily a moral function. To her the ideal education installed the heart as the lord, with intellect as its loyal and harmonious servant.

### ***Women's Education: Developing from 'Family Ideal' to 'Social and National Ideal'***

Upon closely observing the lives of ordinary

women in India Nivedita was firmly convinced that far from being uneducated the conservative Hindu woman was the recipient of an education which was in its own way highly specialised even though its type was such that its value could not be easily assessed. She was particularly in appreciation of the Indian practice of *vratas*, which were ritualised duties held sacred, which the Indian girls were brought up on from early childhood. She believed that they were a way of teaching great spiritual as well as social values (400). While she greatly appreciated the tremendous role women had played particularly within the framework of the family through the ages, she thought they could play a much greater role socially and nationally, and contribute to the making of a much greater Indian nation in future. She felt that their present education, which was within the family framework, was largely an education in discipline rather than a development and that the women in India in the modern age should be developed for greater social potentiality that would make them efficient enough to play much larger and varied roles for the community and country at large than what was traditionally expected of them. She thought that woman to be an ideal, who can fit into any role circumstances demand of her and carry that out perfectly. 'This efficiency to all the circumstances of life, this womanhood before wifehood, and humanity before womanhood, is something which the education of the girl must aim, in every age' (364).

She believed that the hesitation in India towards girls' education had always been due to a misgiving as to its actual aims, and she considered Indian people to be wise in exercising such a cautionary perspective. They had no reason for feeling in any way inferior about their womenfolk, who had, for ages, embodied

grace and sweetness, gentleness and piety, and such virtues that had stood the test of time. Nivedita firmly believed that any scheme of education for girls in India should be based on consolidation of character, and intellectual accompaniments could only be attended to only on this foundation.

Moreover, she thought there was a compelling reason for the educational system for Indian girls needing to be true to the Indian ideals than any other ones put before them. She was convinced that the latter could never be constructive but merely imitative, as it was not based on the 'familiar', thus violating the cardinal principle of education itself. To her, only knowledge in synthesis was true knowledge, and thus, the world had to be seen through the home. 'The educated woman should not be less a home-maker than the uneducated. Rather, she should make a finer home. We are educated, not that we may find easier duties but that we may add to ourselves duties that the uneducated never thought of. Submission was the noblest effort of the uneducated woman. Responsibility is rather the call that comes to the educated.'<sup>7</sup>

She deeply valued the importance of the traditional role of a mother, a wife—who is the sheet anchor of the Indian home. 'Even silence serves, for woman must ever provide the force out of which man acts. It is faith cherished in the home that governs action in the world. To hold a thought and be true to it unwavering, is far greater than to spring impulsively to noble deeds' (27). But founded on this traditional role, it was a wider identification with the community and nation at large that Nivedita envisaged for the Indian woman of the future. 'It is her awakened sense of responsibility that constitutes the truly educated woman. It is her love and pity for her own people, and the wisdom with which she considers their interests,

that marks her out as modern and cultivated and great' (72).

But with changes in the modern world she knew women also had to move along with men for a harmonious life in the family as well as society. 'Unless women are united with men in the scrutiny of life, that scrutiny must for ever remain crippled and barren, unproductive of spiritual growth or civilizing gain. Humanity is only complete in the two-fold organ, the feminine mind united with the masculine, and neither alone' (30).

She warned against an attitude of negativity in those involved in educating the women or anyone for that matter. There was no place for criticism or discouragement. Just as Vivekananda thought service could be truest and highest only when it was rendered while recognising the divine dimension of the served, similarly, Nivedita too, believed that only those who saw the noblest in the taught could be effective as teachers. And this idea extended beyond the individual. 'Only by the love of our own people can we learn the love of humanity—and only by a profound belief in the future of the Indian woman can any man be made worthy to help in bringing that future about', she declared (4.369).

The prophetic vision of a great Bharatvarsha of the future, that Swamiji had livened up in her, made her think of women's role in this great nation-building exercise. And here is the call she gave to all the daughters of Mother India to stand up to the role they had to play for bringing about a great nation. 'It is essential, for the joyous revealing of that great Mother, that she be first surrounded by the mighty circle of these, Her daughters, the Indian women of the days to come. It is they who must consecrate themselves before Her, touching Her feet with their proud heads, and vowing to Her their own, their



husbands, and their children's lives. Then, and then only will she stand crowned before the world. Her sanctuary today is full of shadows. But when the womanhood of India can perform the great Arati of Nationality, that temple shall be all light, nay, the dawn verily shall be near at hand' (362).

### **Manual and Technical Education**

Nivedita had developed ideas and possible lines of action for all phases of education starting from primary to manual and technical, while thinking of nationalistic basis for this. She was a keen observer of new trends in 'human resources development' anywhere in the world. For 'this education, to be of any avail, must extend through all degrees, from its lowest and humblest grades. We must have technical education and we must have also higher research, because technical education, without higher research, is a branch without a tree, a blossom without any root' (329). She was well-abreast with the developments in the US in the space of manual and technical education in which she thought it was leading the world. She knew about latest developments in technical education leading US centres of learning like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Stanford, and also other interesting developments like the Sloyd course in carpentry developed in Sweden.

To Nivedita, in manual education too, the chief object was development of the mind's culture. She believed that without imparting theoretical knowledge in sciences merely manual training would be insufficient and would not do justice towards developing the potentialities within its recipients. 'To attempt to give manual training, without some theoretic knowledge, however elementary, of Mechanics, Physics, and Chemistry, and without the deliberate culture of

the powers of observation with regard to plants, animals, and the outside world generally, is like trying to divorce the hand from the eye, or both from the mind' (420).

In technical education in particular, Nivedita felt that leading Indian tradesmen and privileged class, and the sovereigns of the native states should take a lead. They could sponsor competent candidates to learn such courses abroad, and later direct that experience in starting similar ventures in the country. Here she was advocating a spirit of private philanthropy towards civic and national goals. She knew the charitable instinct in Indians was well-developed and motivated by a religious orientation, but, till then had not been channeled towards causes perceived to be secular. She observed that philanthropy in the West was considerably developed and was driving social and educational transformations. In fact, she pointed out that the 'Public spirit in the West is ... highly developed and Governments and municipalities incorporate a new educational feature, only after it has been well tested and sounded by private persons' (441). She hoped Indians too would exhibit such a spirit. 'A union of two or three far-sighted Indian merchants, anxious for the future of industry in this country, would be sufficient to establish manual training high schools, and technical schools of the College Grade, in the capital of the different presidencies. And Indian Sovereigns might do likewise, each in his own state' (422). That is why, she so energetically, despite severe obstacles, strove to champion J N Tata's plan of a research institution in science and humanities which later fructified into what is today the Indian Institute of Science.

### **The New Three 'R's of Modern Education**

Just like how reading, writing, and arithmetic—the three 'R's—are the basic pillars of elementary

learning, Nivedita firmly held the view that for a proper perspective of the world around us, in the modern age, one had to be fairly developed in the three senses dealing with nature, time, and space, namely, science, history, and geography respectively. In her view these three were closely linked with the question of cultivation of consciousness in 'nationality' and civic virtues. She wrote extensively on how history, geography, and science could be taught—again based on leading the recipient from concrete to the abstract; and from the familiar to the unfamiliar; from one's immediate to the universal.

### **An Education in Nation-Building**

The most important thrust in Nivedita's vision for education in India was to establish it soundly on a basis of a 'national consciousness'. Any effective education had to increase the national self-consciousness, and sentiment of vigour and responsibility. And once this is firm, international and universal dimensions would follow, thus raising it to a new level of perfection. She wrote in the pamphlet *The Project of Ramakrishna School for Girls* published during her US tour of 1900-01: 'To produce an Oriental in whom Orientalism had been intensified, while to it had been added the Western conception of the Cause of Humanity, of the Country, of the People as a whole, Western power of initiative and organisation, Western energy and practicality—such an ideal should inspire our energy of culture in the East' (371).

Nivedita believed that training of the mind and development of power of concentration had been the chief thrust of Hindu education for ages. And therefore, it did not have anything substantial to learn from the West towards this. She felt that the superiority of the West lay in her realisation of the value of united efforts in any given direction. This Western trait she referred

to as the organising of 'the common, popular mind' (335). It was here that she felt India could learn from the West.

According to Nivedita: 'A national education is, first and foremost, an education in the national idealism. We must remember, however, that the aim of education is emancipation of sympathy and intellect' (351). She wanted the ideals presented before the children and students to be in a form informed by their own past. 'Our imagination must be first based on our own heroic literature. Our hope must be woven out of our history. From the known to the unknown, from the easy to the difficult, must be the motto of every teacher, the rule of every lesson' (352). A true national education in India would awaken people towards a life of sacrifice towards '*jana-desha-dharma*' (346).

### **India is all, I am nothing!**

On his return to India, Swamiji in his Madras lecture gave this mantra to his country people: 'For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote—this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for the time from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, our own race—"everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything."<sup>8</sup> Echoing that Nivedita said: 'This, the desire to serve, the longing to better conditions, to advance our fellows, to lift the whole, is the real religion of the present day. Everything else is doctrine, opinion, theory. Here is the fire of faith and action. Each day should begin with some conscious act of reference to it. A moment of silence, a hymn, a prayer, a salutation.'<sup>9</sup> She hoped minds and hearts will be trained to the service of the *jana-desha-dharma*, the religion of the country of the people, and that will act as the motive-spring of all the struggles.

Nivedita thought of 'organised unselfishness' (347) as the foundation of national feeling. 'The best preparation for nation-making that a child can receive is to see his elders always eager to consider the general good, rather than their own. ... We are a nation, where every man is an organ of the whole, when every part of the whole is precious to us, when the family weighs nothing, in comparison with the People' (347-8).

Moving to the larger ideal of 'nationality' is a constant refrain in Nivedita's writings and she wished the people of the country, particularly the children and youth deeply nurture this ideal within themselves. 'The centre of gravity must lie, for them, outside the family. We must demand from them sacrifices for India, Bhakti for India, learning for India' (348).

Such an education to Nivedita was the perfect recipe for creating future heroes. She did not think heroes were born; she believed all human beings have an innate longing for self-sacrifice, and the force of heroic thought impels them in that direction.

She thought that the challenge of educating the Indian masses could be best solved by dedicated and inspired educational missionaries coming from within the country. It was her fervent desire to see a band of educational missionaries who would, across the length and the breadth of the country, educate the masses. She took the example of many Western countries where young men were required to serve for a few years in the military service and hoped for a similar army of educational missionaries in India. 'Why should it be thought impossible that every student, when his own education is over, should be called upon to give three years to the people?' (331), she wondered. She believed that this could not be organised by any central efforts but by voluntary selflessness of the people of the country themselves.

She knew that in the modern times a strong Indian nation needs to have a thoroughly democratised society with careers open to ability for all and towards achievement of this education was the key. 'The motherland must recognise no caste, for that would prevent her availing herself of the best possible service. For this, the presence of a social formation representing democracy is absolutely necessary. So far from recognising caste, indeed, education must be absolutely democratised, in order that all talents may be discovered, and the remaking of the *Swadesh* may proceed apace' (292).

She thought that there was no other way of making unity of the country effective than education: 'If one class of the people derive all their mental sustenance from one set of ideas, and the bulk of the population from something else, this unity, although certainly present, cannot easily be made effective' (330). She felt that all had to be trained to respond to the same forces in the same ways, and by that alone the country would acquire solidarity and power of prompt and intelligent action.


Just like her Master, Nivedita too, was at her inspired best while giving a call to her countrymen for a life of sacrifice. She clearly saw that 'we have no choice, that the education of all, the People as well as the classes, woman as well as man,—is not to be a desire with us, but lies upon us as a command. Humanity is mind, not body, soul, not flesh. Its heritage is in the life of thought and feeling. To close against any the gates of the higher life is a sin far greater than that of murder, for it means responsibility for spiritual death, for inner bondage, and the result is ruin unspeakable. There is but one imperative duty before us today. It is to help on Education by our very lives if need be. Education in the great sense as well as the little, in the little as well as in the big' (342-3). And here again she

continuously tried to raise the ideal from family and community to nation at large.

Why should we limit the social motive to a man's own family, or to his own community? Why not alter the focus, till we all stand, aiming each at the good of all-the-others, and willing, if need be, to sacrifice himself, his family, and even his particular social group, for the good of the whole? The will of the hero is ever an impulse to self-sacrifice. ... Shall I leave my family to struggle with poverty, unprovided? Away with the little vision! Shall we not eagerly die, both I and they, to show to the world what the Indian idea of duty may be? May not a single household be glad to starve, in order that a nation's face may shine? The hero's choice is made in a flash. To him, the larger vision is closer than the near (336–7).

And she urged the countrymen to immerse this little 'self' into the *Virat* of *Bharatvarsha*. 'The great teacher of Dakshinewar used to hold gold in one hand and earth in the other, and change them backwards and forwards, from hand to hand, muttering "Earth is Gold! Gold is earth!" till, having lost all sense of their relative values, he could throw them both into the river. Similarly let us say, "India is all, I am nothing! I am nothing! India is all" till one idea alone remains with us, of throwing away self and life and ease, as so much dross, in the great stream of effort that is making for the national righteousness' (5.27).

The central theme of Sister Nivedita's mission was to create a strong national consciousness in Indian people. Each Indian should live for the country's sake and hold oneself as an offering to Mother India, was her constant thrust. On her beads she was known to repeat *Bharatvarsha*, India as the mantra. Steeped in the idea of reaching Advaita through rejecting dualities, she urged everyone to imagine India is one, as imagining so she would actually

become one. To her India was the great unity all Indian people had to arrive at. In today's times when people question whether India is or can ever be called a 'nation' and point out what they think is her 'fragmentary nature', Nivedita's exhortation to her Indian brethren has an abiding value. 'Let love for country and countrymen, for People and Soil, be the mould into which our lives flow hot. If we reach this, every thought we think, every word of knowledge gained, will aid in making clearer and clearer the great picture. With faith in the Mother, and Bhakti for India, the true interpretation of facts will come to us unsought. We shall see the country as united, where we were told that she was fragmentary. Thinking her united, she will actually be so. The universe is the creation of mind, not matter. And can any one force in the world resist a single thought, held with intensity by three hundred millions of people?' (4.349) 

## Notes and References

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# ***Reflections on Hinduphobia: A Perspective from a Scholar-Practitioner***

**Jeffery D Long**

## ***What Is Hinduphobia?***

**H**INDUPHOBIA: The term was coined by independent scholar, Rajiv Malhotra, although the London-based group, Hindu Human Rights, also has a claim in this regard.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps each arrived at the term independently. In any case, what is of interest to us here is not who can be credited with coining the term first, but the phenomenon to which it points.

Like any phobia, Hinduphobia is an intense and deeply rooted aversion—a fear and hatred—in this case, of Hindus and Hinduism. As such, Hinduphobia is a non-rational phenomenon. That is, it is not the result of a process of reasoning or thoughtful reflection based on experience. It is a feeling that occurs at a visceral level rather than at the refined level of the intellect, though it can manifest as a set of intellectual claims that portray Hindus and Hinduism in a negative light. This set of claims—let us call it *Hinduphobic discourse*—is a narrative which typically portrays Hinduism exclusively as an oppressive and regressive tradition, inextricably bound up with social institutions like caste and patriarchy. In this discourse, positive and progressive aspects of Hindu traditions—such as those which question or oppose caste prejudice or male chauvinism—are either ignored or attributed to outside, non-Hindu influences. Hindu teachings, for example, of nonviolence and vegetarianism become solely the result of Jain or Buddhist influence. The use of beautiful *murtis*, idols, in worship is attributed solely to

the coming of the Greeks to India. And Hindu work for uplifting the poor and downtrodden of India is portrayed as an imitation of the Christian missionaries. This is not to say that such outside influences have been wholly absent from the history of Hinduism; for indeed, openness to new ideas and practices has been part of the genius of the Hindu tradition for centuries. But the Hinduphobic discourse is characterised by a persistent refusal to see Hindus as positive, active agents in the development of Hindu traditions—or, for that matter, in determining their own destinies. In the words of the University of Chicago-based historian, Ronald Inden, it is a discourse which treats Hindus as ‘patients’ rather than ‘agents’.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Inden, it should be noted that, though he never utilises the term ‘Hinduphobia’—his work predates its coinage by a number of years—he anticipates many contemporary critiques of Hinduphobic discourse in his presentation of how India as a whole has been depicted over the course of two centuries of Indological scholarship. A great deal of the substance of contemporary critiques of Hinduphobia is, in fact, anticipated by Inden. In my opinion, his work deserves a much wider readership than it currently enjoys.

## ***Differentiating Hinduphobic Discourse from Objective and Constructive Critique***

Acknowledging the reality of the Hinduphobic discourse is not to say that specific aspects of

Hindu thought or practice, or the actions of particular Hindus, can never be examined critically, or to deny that there are or have been oppressive and regressive elements in Hindu society at varied points in history. Indeed, Swami Vivekananda himself faced stiff opposition from such elements in the early years of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Order. Swamis of the Order were derided by some as 'scavenger monks' for working to alleviate the suffering of the poor, and Swami Vivekananda himself was castigated for initiating non-Brahmins and Westerners into his Order, and for not being himself a brahmin by birth. But there is a world of difference between constructive criticism, aimed at emphasising and drawing out the best in the Hindu tradition, and seeking to define the entire tradition only by the worst actions of those who claim to inhabit it. In fact, this is the dividing line between genuine, objective, or constructive critique and Hinduphobia. One seeks to make the highest Hindu ideals a reality. The other seeks Hinduism's eradication.

Like similar phobias, such as racism, the root causes of Hinduphobia are a combination of individual psychological and broader cultural factors: biases imprinted on the mind from an early age by one's family and society, including the media and educational system. To the extent that it is a result of such cultural imprinting, it is possible for Hinduphobia to be a largely unconscious phenomenon, manifesting only when one actually encounters and engages with Hindus and Hindu traditions. It is possible that, just as one might be a racist and not know it until meeting people from a different ethnic group, one might also be a Hinduphobe and not be aware of it until meeting Hindus or encountering Hindu thought and practice through books or other media.

One might also *not* be Hinduphobic, in the sense of holding a deep and visceral aversion to

Hindus or Hinduism, but nevertheless inadvertently participate in and replicate the Hinduphobic discourse because one has been educated to believe that this discourse is an accurate depiction of reality. While latent Hinduphobia might only manifest when one meets actual Hindus, one who has been educated in the Hinduphobic discourse while not harbouring Hinduphobic feelings is likely to be pleasantly surprised upon meeting Hindus. In this regard, I recall a conversation I once had with a friend who is a sadhu in a Hindu *sampradaya*. He narrated an encounter in which he met a group of American students who seemed shocked to find him a warm, kind, open-hearted human being. One of them even told him: 'We were afraid of you until we met you.' These students had been presented only with stories and images of fierce sadhus attacking persons of other traditions and asserting Hindu superiority. The reality they encountered in my friend was far different from this!

Precisely because it is, like racism, often unconscious, rather than treating Hinduphobia in a way that will arouse defensiveness—that is, as a kind of moral failing—it may be more productive to approach Hinduphobia as a discourse or ideology that has become embedded in people's thought processes: a set of views which share the quality of persistently casting Hindus and Hinduism in a negative light, despite all evidence to the contrary. The phrase 'despite all evidence to the contrary' is important; for it is here that the irrationality of Hinduphobia lies: in adherence to negative views about Hinduism, not as the conclusion of a thoughtful process of rational reflection on experience, but as axiomatic to one's worldview, much as one would adhere to the claims of a religious faith. Hinduphobic discourse can be refuted. Visceral Hinduphobia, like racism, is a harder nut to crack.

The important distinction between

Hinduphobia and what I call sincere, thoughtful critique of Hindus and Hinduism is the closed and irrational character of the Hinduphobic discourse. The Hinduphobe, in other words, has already decided, before the conversation has even begun, that Hinduism is in some way inherently flawed and problematic. Hinduphobic discourse thus follows a circular logic, in which the conclusion has already been built into the premises: that, *whatever the problem or issue in question, Hindus and Hinduism are at fault.*

Sincere and thoughtful critiques of Hindus and Hinduism, on the other hand, are evidence-based. They are open to the good and the bad which one finds in any human community, and any tradition entrusted to the care of flawed, limited human beings. A test of whether Hinduphobia is at play in a critique of Hindus or Hinduism is to ask, ‘Is there any scenario, short of their complete renunciation of Hinduism, in which Hindus might address this critique in a way the critic would find acceptable?’ In other words, is it the critique of something specific which Hindus might address while adhering to Hindu principles—or even better, that Hindus might address *by means of* Hindu principles? Or are Hindus being criticised, essentially, for being Hindus? If the former is the case, then the critique is genuine, even if Hindus ultimately choose to reject it—for criticisms themselves need to be analysed critically. If the latter is the case, we are dealing with Hinduphobia. A similar test could be applied to criticisms of other worldviews and traditions.

There is a distinction, important to many Hindu practitioners, between what might be called the essence or eternal truth at the heart of the Hindu traditions—the Sanatana dharma or perennial philosophy of Vedanta—and the opinions and the practices of specific Hindus at specific times and places in history. Not all

sincere and thoughtful critics of Hinduism will observe this distinction; but certainly, those who identify with the tradition—Hindu critics of Hinduism or self-critics—will typically differentiate between the eternal truths of the Sanatana dharma—which are axiomatic to a Hindu way of life—and the particular interpretations, and manipulations, to which these truths have been subject at various points in time. There is a difference between the essence of dharma—affirming which, one can say, is part of what it means to be a Hindu—and its many manifestations, which can vary across time and space, and whose authenticity may fairly be disputed. Indeed, this kind of argumentation within and among Hindu traditions has been going on for millennia.

One may very well object that the distinction between the essence of Hindu dharma and its many manifestations simply mirrors the circular character of the Hinduphobic discourse: that, whatever the problem or issue in question, the *essential core* of Hinduism is *never* at fault. This is a fair objection. The response to it is that this is what it means, or at least part of what it means, to be a committed Hindu.

In other words, if one concludes that the essential core of Hindu dharma is fundamentally flawed—as opposed to finding fault with some specific form or expression of it—then one will, in all likelihood, cease to identify oneself as Hindu, except perhaps in an ethnic or cultural sense, as opposed to an expression of one’s philosophy of life.

One may, of course, question whether there is an essential core of Hinduism, and of what it might consist. But that, again, is the kind of question Hindus have debated for centuries. It may even be said that participating in this debate—this internal critique—is also an important part of what it means to be Hindu, at least for those who are intellectually inclined.

Sincere and thoughtful critique of Hindu thought and practice is not only possible, but also desirable, because it is an essential portion of the spiritual path, at least as conceived in the Vedanta tradition. *Mananam*, or reflection on the teachings that one has learned, or ‘heard’, *shravanam*, is a process that necessarily involves questioning, leaving no stone unturned, no topic off limits, as one seeks to understand the truth. Hinduism is not, at its authentic core, a tradition of censorship, of squelching intellectual inquiry and debate. On the contrary, such debate flourished in classical India, as adherents of various worldviews, *darshanas*, engaged critically with one another’s claims.

The critique of Hinduphobia offered here is therefore not an attempt to censor or to cut off intellectual debate, or sincere and thoughtful criticism. It is, rather, an attempt to define a deeply pernicious form of discourse that is ultimately anti-intellectual, inasmuch as it is rooted in the deep bias that Hindus and Hinduism can do no right, despite evidence to the contrary. It is an intellectual manifestation of what is, at core, an irrational aversion—a phobia, or a fear of and hatred for Hindus and Hinduism—and it is even capable, as we have already discussed, of ‘colonising’ the minds of those who do not hold such an aversion, but are, rather, educated into the Hinduphobic discourse. In short, Hinduphobia, as understood here, is a form of intellectual imperialism which functions to strip validity and agency from Hinduism and any who identify with a Hindu philosophy of life. It is not simply a critique of Hinduism, in a straightforward sense—which is welcome if pursued in a truly objective and constructive spirit—but a deeply embedded and very often unexamined set of assumptions pervading some, though not all, academic writing on Hinduism.

### **Varieties of Hinduphobic Discourse**

My focus in this essay is not Hinduphobia in all its varied forms—both in popular culture and in scholarly writing—but rather, Hinduphobic *discourse* as it manifests in academic writing in particular. As a practitioner in a Hindu tradition who is also an academic scholar of Hinduism, I do not claim to have a unique or perfect vantage point for understanding and explaining this issue. I do, though, have a perspective that I hope will be helpful to Hindus in conceptualising the issue of what has come to be known as ‘academic Hinduphobia.’<sup>3</sup> My aim will not be to critique or ‘out’ particular scholars by name, but to point to the trends in academic writing which might be placed under the category of the Hinduphobic discourse. My focus, in short, will be defining and describing Hinduphobic discourse, not accusing any specific person of harbouring Hinduphobia. As a deep and visceral feeling, it would require a psychoanalyst deeply informed in Hindu traditions to diagnose Hinduphobia in the case of any particular person, unless that person’s Hinduphobia was truly conscious and blatant. I certainly claim no privileged window into the psyches of my fellow scholars, most of whom I know as sincere and decent people. Hinduphobic discourse, though, *is* something one can identify, evaluate, and critique, independently of any motives that one might impute to those who participate in and perpetuate it. Again, it is possible to have been educated in this discourse and simply take what one has taught to be an accurate reflection of truth. The critique of Hinduphobic discourse, though, invites one to take a more critical attitude, not only toward the scholarship of others, but even toward one’s own, in order to discern whether one might, even inadvertently, be replicating it. What follows, then, are simply my own observations about the varieties of Hinduphobic



discourse I have encountered in my career thus far, as well as about forms of discourse which might be taken as Hinduphobic, but which are in fact distinct from it.

It is important to note that simply because some Hindus or some groups of Hindus do not like a particular piece of academic writing, this alone does not place that writing in the category of Hinduphobic discourse. The criterion, again, is this: 'Is there any scenario, short of their complete renunciation of Hinduism, in which Hindus might address this critique in a way the critic would find acceptable?' If the answer to this question is 'no', then we are dealing with Hinduphobia.

I would divide the academic writing that might easily be regarded as Hinduphobic into two categories, which I call *Apparent Hinduphobia* and *Real Hinduphobia*. Each of these categories is further divided into two further subcategories. In the category of *Apparent Hinduphobia*, I place what I call 'Tone Deafness' and *Genuine Disagreement*. *Real Hinduphobia*, on the other hand, consists of *Open Hinduphobia* and *Deep Hinduphobia*. Deep Hinduphobia is further divided into Freudian and Marxist sub-varieties.

This schema can be illustrated in the following way:

Hinduphobic Discourse:

- 1) Apparent Hinduphobia
  - a) 'Tone Deafness'
  - b) Genuine Disagreement
- 2) Real Hinduphobia
  - a) Open Hinduphobia:  
Anti-Hindu Apologetics
  - b) Deep Hinduphobia:  
The Hermeneutics of Suspicion
    - i) Freudian
    - ii) Marxist

Again, the point of this analysis is to establish the conceptual contours of the Hinduphobic discourse. The claim is not that any scholar who utilises Freudian or Marxist methodologies is a Hinduphobe in a pathological sense. On the contrary, there are dimensions of both Freudianism and Marxism that can be extremely useful to Hindu discourse. The claim, rather, is that there are certain ways of deploying these methodologies that are clearly hostile to Hinduism, and that these need to be understood in order to be addressed.

Apparent Hinduphobia is just that: apparent. There is writing about Hinduism that is, for a variety of reasons, off-putting, and perhaps even deeply offensive, to many Hindus. It may fail, though, to meet the criterion of belonging to Hinduphobic discourse: 'Is there any scenario, short of their complete renunciation of Hinduism, in which Hindus might address this critique in a way the critic would find acceptable?'

Apparent Hinduphobia falling under the category of 'Tone Deafness' may not even contain a critique of Hinduism. There is a certain way of writing about Hindu thought and practice which comes across as cold and clinical. This is often a function of the effort of the author to maintain a stance of objectivity. Particularly if one is accustomed to writing on Hindu thought and practice that is reverential, or even devotional, in tone, some academic writing on Hinduism may read as if the author is describing some newly discovered species of bacteria. Religious people will naturally find such writing disrespectful and inappropriate for sacred topics. Authors of this kind of writing, though, are not trying to express reverence or devotion—but neither are they seeking to demean or attack the topics they are discussing. They see themselves as social scientists, trying to describe human behaviour and thought using the agreed upon categories of their discipline. They may even be

practising Hindus themselves. When they are writing in this mode, though, they are wearing their ‘anthropologist hat’, or ‘sociologist hat’, or ‘religious scholar hat’, and so on.

The second type of apparently Hinduphobic writing, which I call Genuine Disagreement, does include criticisms of specific Hindu teachings or practices; but it is not aimed at undermining the tradition as a whole. If one applies our criterion in these cases—‘Is there any scenario, short of their complete renunciation of Hinduism, in which Hindus might address this critique in a way the critic would find acceptable?’—the answer to the question will be, ‘Yes’. Indeed, the full answer will be that this is precisely what the author is aiming to achieve: some reform or revision in the way the Hindu community is practising or thinking about some topic. Such critiques may be of an internal variety—by Hindus seeking to advance an agenda of social or political reform—or may come from outsiders—non-Hindus—who nevertheless see themselves as friends of the tradition. Of course, whether such critiques are received in this spirit or as forms of Hinduphobic discourse is in the eye of the beholder. It will depend upon the stance the reader takes on the particular topic on which the author is writing. If the author sees a particular practice by Hindus as reprehensible and in need of reform, and if the reader sees that practice as essential to Hinduism, then the reader will answer our criterion question with a ‘no’ and judge the writing to be Hinduphobic. The Hindu American Foundation’s critical report on caste may be a good example of writing in this category.<sup>4</sup>

We come, then, to Real Hinduphobia. We are speaking now of Hinduphobic writing aimed specifically at undermining Hindu traditions, seeing these traditions as inherently oppressive and destructive to human life and flourishing.

The first sub-variety of Real Hinduphobia—Open Hinduphobia—consists of writing that is plainly opposed to Hinduism as such. It typically consists of apologetic writing. Here ‘apologetic’ does not mean what it does in regular, daily discourse—to speak in a way that is remorseful, or that shows that one feels sorry for something. The older meaning of *apologetics* in Christian theology is a discourse that is intended to advance and defend one’s tradition. This can either take the form of defending one’s own views from the arguments of others, or arguing actively against the views of others. Writing of this kind, directed against Hinduism, is ancient. It includes the early colonial-era writing of Christian missionaries, seeking to refute Hinduism and win converts, or even earlier, of Islamic apologists arguing against Hinduism in the name of advancing Islam. Writing of this kind continues today, such as among evangelical Christians seeking, just like their predecessors, to convert people from Hinduism to Christianity.

Such apologetics are rare in the contemporary academy, though, and occur more often in the popular media. Such writing has fallen out of fashion in the academy for a variety of reasons. One is the dominant worldview of the academy, which is more drawn to a scientific materialism than to openly religious views, which are seen by many as irrational. We shall return to this point shortly. Another is the rise of multiculturalism among many scholars: a stance which sees open criticism of religious belief systems, particularly of communities that form minorities in the West, as a form of intellectual violence and oppression. Hinduphobic writing by Christian polemicists who are also professional scholars of Hindu thought and practice was quite common among earlier generations of scholars, as has been documented most recently in the work of Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee.<sup>5</sup> According

to Adluri and Bagchee, such writing and the dispositions behind it have left a legacy in the world of Indological scholarship, even among those secular scholars who do not, themselves, identify as Christians, and so would not necessarily be expected to have taken on the theological assumptions of their forebears in a new form.

This legacy is, of course, the Hinduphobic discourse I have been describing. Again, it is possible, even for one who does not feel any visceral hatred for Hindus or Hinduism, to absorb the deeply embedded assumptions behind one's education, even while holding a very different view on a conscious level.

One part of the legacy of the older anti-Hindu apologetics—or Open Hinduphobia—has been the emergence of Deep Hinduphobia. Deep Hinduphobia consists of the application of what has come to be called the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' to Hindu thought and practice, on the assumption that Hindu thought and practice are fundamentally oppressive, misguided, and superstitious. It is quite different from Open Hinduphobia, in that Open Hinduphobia actively engages with Hindu ideas in order to refute them—much in the same way that adherents of the ancient Indic systems of philosophy engaged with one another. Deep Hinduphobia does not bother to do this. Instead, it begins with the assumption that of course Hinduism, and religion generally, is a delusion, a result of false consciousness. On this basis, it seeks to deconstruct the beliefs and practices of Hindus by revealing them to, in fact, consist of attempts to control society or repress certain behaviours.

While many of the critiques of Hinduphobia tend to lump all Hinduphobic discourse into one category—conflating Christian missionaries with secular Freudian and Marxist skeptics—the perspective from which Deep Hinduphobia operates is, in reality, just as hostile to Christianity

and other religions as it is to Hinduism. The view of reality it takes to be true is essentially materialistic and sees human beings as being driven wholly by material urges—either sexual, as in the case of Freudian approaches, or in the form of money or power, as in Marxist approaches.

If one were to analyse the Hinduphobic discourse in terms of the four *purusharthas*, or the aims of human life, found in the Hindu traditions, then Open Hinduphobia could be seen to operate on the level of *dharma*. The anti-Hindu polemicist seeks to advance a religious view other than Hinduism in order to undermine and replace it, but does so openly and honestly. Marxist Deep Hinduphobia operates on the level of *artha*—of wealth and power—seeing this as the fundamental human urge. And, of course, Freudian Deep Hinduphobia operates on the level of *kama*—sensual pleasure—seeing *this* as the fundamental human urge.

From these perspectives, the highest human goal—*moksha*—is held to be a delusion. People really want either wealth and power or sensual pleasure, and their religious beliefs and aspirations are a cover for these pursuits. Again, this is never argued directly. It is simply assumed.

Because it does not engage directly and openly with Hindu ideas—treating these, rather, as symptomatic of false consciousness—the hermeneutics of suspicion utilised in Deep Hinduphobic discourse is akin to the following scenario:

Let us say that a scholar presents a logical argument at a conference for the reality of reincarnation, looking at the evidence of children who seem to have memories of past lives that cannot be accounted for through more conventional means, and also comparing the doctrines of karma and rebirth with other available options for belief about what happens after we die, such as the materialist belief in no after-life, or teachings of an eternal heaven or hell.

During the question and answer session that follows, rather than directly addressing the evidence the scholar has presented, an opponent of these ideas instead says something like: 'Surely you don't believe that!' Or, perhaps more pointedly, 'You know, Hitler also believed in rebirth.'


To be sure, most discourse of this kind is not so unsophisticated. But the essential structure of the argument is the same: the ideas being rejected are not even worthy of serious consideration, and so another story needs to be told about why they are held—a causal story, involving something more plausible than the idea that karma, rebirth, Brahman, or Atman are concepts that have a persuasive appeal. This story involves something that the opponent *does* find persuasive: like wealth, power, and sex. The opponent prefers to find these motivations lurking behind such beliefs, rather than giving serious consideration to a worldview—like Vedanta—that, when it is taken seriously, shakes materialism to its very foundations.

### Conclusion

To assert that a Hinduphobic discourse exists, and to critique that discourse, is not to say that Hindus and Hinduism can never be on the receiving end of legitimate criticism. As Pravrajika Vrajaprana writes:

What is generally considered 'religion' is a mixture of essentials and nonessentials; as Sri Ramakrishna said, all scriptures contain a mixture of sand and sugar. We need to take out the sugar and leave the sand behind: we should extract the essence of religion—whether we call it union with God or Self-realization—and leave the rest behind. Whatever helps us to manifest our divinity we embrace; whatever pulls us away from that ideal, we avoid.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, any discourse that is built upon or that serves to cultivate fear and hatred

is likewise an impediment to God-realisation, whether it is Hinduphobia or phobia of some other religion or ideology. Even the critique of Hinduphobia ought to be pursued not out of fear or hatred of any individual. This is one of the reasons I have not focused on specific scholars in this outline of the Hinduphobic discourse. We should not operate out of Hinduphobia, but nor should we operate out of Hinduphobia-phobia. The aim of the critique of Hinduphobia, rather, is to advance truth, and to reveal—particularly in the case of Deep Hinduphobia—the conceptual underpinnings of the Hinduphobic discourse so they can be addressed directly, through logical argumentation, pursued with open-mindedness and compassion. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'Fear comes from the selfish idea of cutting one's self off from the universe. The smaller and the more selfish I make myself, the more is my fear. If a man thinks he is a little nothing, fear will surely come upon him. And the less you think of yourself as an insignificant person, the less fear there will be for you.'<sup>7</sup> 

### Notes and References

1. Personal communication.
2. See Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University, 2001).
3. See Rajiv Malhotra, *Academic Hinduphobia* (New Delhi: Voices of India, 2016).
4. See Hindu American Foundation, *Hinduism: Not Cast in Caste: Seeking an End to Caste-based Discrimination* <<https://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/hinduism-not-cast-caste-full-report>> accessed 07 October 2017.
5. See Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee, *The Nay Science: A History of German Indology* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014).
6. Pravrajika Vrajaprana, *Vedanta: A Simple Introduction* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2011), 40.
7. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 3.89.



# Gems of Memories: Reminiscences of Swami Saradeshnananda

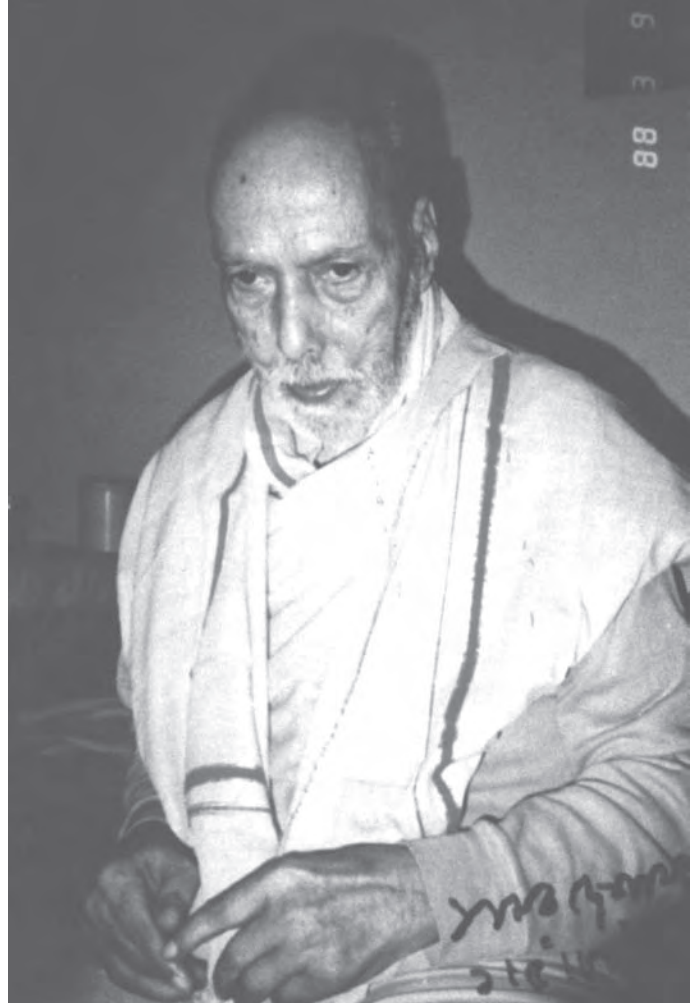
**Swami Shuklatmananda**

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

ONE DAY, IN A LIGHTER MOOD, I said to Saradeshnananda: 'I heard that you hardly got yourself involved with Ramakrishna Mission's work, rather you spent your whole life in spiritual practices.' In reply he said:

In whichever ashrama I was, I did every work wholeheartedly. I never ate ashrama's food without doing any work. Even in Vrindavan, I did whatever little I could as long as my body permitted. The old monks know that I have been to various challenging relief works, which you dare not undertake. I served the cholera patients with my own hands. I went to whichever places the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission authorities sent me for relief work. I never said 'no'! And moreover, I never avoided my duties in the name of spiritual practices. Wherever I have been, I tried to perform my assigned duty to the best of my ability. I have always been true to my conscience.

I heard from Saradeshnananda that a brahmachari, out of renunciatory zeal, went to Uttarakhand to do spiritual practices. On his way, he fell ill with severe fever. He met Saradeshnananda in Rishikesh. Saradeshnananda nursed him back to health. The brahmachari, captivated by his love and affection, returned to the Order. Now



he is the head of one of the centres of the Order outside India.

A brahmachari left the Order in reaction to not receiving sannnyasa vows in due time because of some pitfalls in his monastic life. I said to Saradeshnananda: 'Perhaps he may not leave the Order if you make him understand.' He said: 'That would be of no avail. If I speak to him, he may stay awhile but he will go away again after a few days. I spoke to Madhavananda for one or two such candidates. He said: "Alright, he will not be asked to leave as you are saying, but you will see that he will not stay long." Later I found that he was quite correct. The candidate left the Order after sannnyasa. That is why I do not recommend anyone these days.'

Once two young men came to Saradeshnananda and expressed their wish to lead a

monastic life. He gave his assent to one of them to lead a monastic life. He advised the other to continue his studies and then decide for himself. Later, it was seen that the candidate who received Saradeshananda's approval to become a monk, eventually led an exemplary monastic life in the Ramakrishna Order. The other, after completing higher education, became a householder.

Once a much venerated monk, Swami Bhavanananda of the Ramakrishna Order told me: 'I saw Saradeshananda only once. Fascinating was this experience! We did not know one another. I went to his room alone. He was lying on his bed. When I made salutations to him by touching his feet, he said: "Who is there? Come here; let me see your face." When I went near him, he said: "Study Sanskrit, it will be useful later." I had a love for the Sanskrit language all along, but I did not tell him anything about this. I felt inspired by his words. The rest of my life got spent in teaching Sanskrit to the brahmacharis. His words still ring in my ears.'

One day I saw Gopeshananda lying on his bed, thinking deeply about something. After a while he commented on the passing away of some of our senior monks: 'According to my experience, those who are the knowers of Brahman, that is, those who are already liberated do not have to take birth any more. At the time of leaving their bodies, the phenomena like exhalation of *prana* or gasping of breath do not occur as they do in ordinary persons. The scriptures also affirm it. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says: 'But the person who does not desire (never transmigrates). Of one who is without desires, who is free from desires.'<sup>24</sup> Again one finds in the *Shiva Gita*: 'After staying there for a long period one gets moksha along with Brahman. Only that knower of Brahman remains one with Brahman as salt melts in water.'<sup>25</sup> Also it is mentioned in the Bhagavata: 'With the identification of

the self with Brahman, the ego ceases to exist. Hence, it is no longer possible for one to be subject to any kind of movement.'<sup>26</sup>

Saradeshananda greatly disliked talking anything about others in their absence. He used to say: 'It is at the root of all misunderstanding.' He himself was very particular about it. I remember an incident in this regard. A brahmachari, in tears, was narrating something to him. When I entered the room and saw him crying like that, I asked Saradeshananda about the matter. But he said: 'I'll not tell you why he is crying. You'll come to know about it sooner or later. Moreover, he has asked me not to disclose it to anybody.'

Sometimes, on request, Maharaj used to sign copies of his books *Shri Shri Chaitanya Dev*, *Shri Shri Mayer Smritikatha*, and so on. One of the monks, who was very close to him, once requested me to get a book signed by him, with a line like, 'Presenting this book to ...' added to it. I got Saradeshananda's signature on the book. As he finished, he said to me: 'Give him the price for the book.' I said: 'Why? He will never take it.' To this he replied: 'Don't you go beyond the domain of truth. I explicitly wrote on the book that I was giving that to him, and now it cannot be that he buys the book himself.'

Once, some of the eminent monks of the Ramakrishna Order went to Tirupati. Going inside, as special guests of the temple authority, they saw Saradeshananda making silently doing *japa* in a secluded corner of the temple. His appearance was almost like that of a beggar. He was then on a pilgrimage without any money at all. Later he told me: 'Then I didn't have money even to buy postcards.'

While Swami Premeshananda was staying in Varanasi, sadhus were invited to a devotee's house. He said to some of the monks: 'You take Saradeshananda along with you and have your alms there.' Upon returning to the ashrama, the

monks said to Premeshananda: 'We are not going with Saradeshananda again.' On being asked why, they said: 'They had all sorts of arrangements in their house, but Saradeshananda ate very little of the items and finished his lunch in no time. In keeping with him, we also had to finish as quickly as possible. We hardly ate anything.'

A brahmachari was in the habit of finding fault with others. Once when he confessed his weakness to Saradeshananda, he said:

See my boy, all the members of this holy Order have come owing to Sri Ramakrishna's pull. He has sheltered each one of us, knowing fully well our past as well as our future. He only knows what conduces to our welfare. He teaches his devotees through the ups and downs of their lives. *Sri Sri Chandi* says: 'That goddess resides in all beings in the form of error.'<sup>27</sup> Perhaps it is for the eventual good of his children that he, as a kind of punishment for them, keeps them away for a while. When all their guilt is burnt away by the fire of their repentance, God again embraces his children. Who are we, with our limited and tarnished intellect, to judge his divine play? Truly speaking, to find fault with someone belonging to his holy Order is to find fault with him. How do we understand what is conducive for someone? Instead we all should find faults with ourselves and rectify them. Just a little thinking will show that you yourselves are not without faults. Then what right have you to criticise others? Only one who has no faults can criticise others. But such a person never criticises others. It's not that I am scolding you for your habit of criticising others. Do not mistake me. I'm telling you these things for your good only. This is just the beginning of your monastic life. With a little perseverance you can surely overcome such obstacles.

Once a monk, being newly appointed as the Secretary of an ashrama, came to seek Saradeshananda's blessings. Saradeshananda said to him: 'The ashrama you are going to take charge of, is

quite old. Don't make any major changes at once. First study the situation and needs of the ashrama for a year or so and then decide for yourself.'

Once when a lady devotee asked for Saradeshananda's blessings, he said: 'You are like my mother. How can I bless you? Rather, you bless me.' In another instance, a monk, who received much affection from Saradeshananda, said to him while massaging his hands: 'You have served the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi with these hands, please bless me with them.' Saradeshananda said: 'Oh, if these hands could do anything special, I would have first kept them on my own head. Look at the condition of my health! It's me who needs blessings most!'

Saradeshananda once wrote to a devotee about guru and the role of guru in spiritual life:

If one has firm faith in God and has the sincere longing to realise his grace, the soul whose unconditional mercy brings this earnest desire of the devotee to fruition is called guru. From time immemorial, it has been the sole responsibility of the gurus to enable the disciples to tread the path of God realisation by teaching them specific spiritual disciplines. It is said that there occurs transference of spiritual power from the guru to the disciple at the time of initiation. This sort of transference is only possible for gurus of extraordinary ability. Again, it becomes easier for the guru if the disciple is pure hearted. It is a popular belief in India that our present life is regulated largely by the actions, karma, of our past lives. Only with God's abundant grace, one may find ways to bypass the effect of one's actions.

Once when a young devotee, having suffered a great deal from internal conflicts, wrote a letter to Saradeshananda, he replied:

A person is born with the accumulated impressions of past lives. These subtle impressions of mind unfurl with time. Along with it all the impressions of this life get added, and give it

a new momentum. This greatly affects man's nature. Accumulation of wealth in a righteous way and marriage are not actually detrimental to spiritual progress, rather they are conducive to leading a morally pure life. This system is prevalent in Indian society from ancient times. You fervently pray to God. He will definitely lead you along the right path.

When a lady, stricken with grief at the death of her only daughter, wrote to Saradeshananda, he replied:

Mother, I am overcome with great sorrow and sadness, on receiving the heartbreaking news in your letter. In hours of this terrible grief, it is not for human effort to provide consolation and peace to the suffering soul. I fervently pray to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother to extinguish the fire of grief in your heart and fill you with peace and tranquillity. God, at the beginning of Creation, assumes the forms of Father and Mother, to perpetuate the flow of it. Please try to offer your love and affection to the eternal parents of the world, Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, thinking them as your own children. Truly, they, the innermost self of everybody, have assumed the forms of children.

Once, Saradeshananda wrote to a monk:

In all matters, it is safe to rely on Sri Ramakrishna. You have always been obedient to the Ramakrishna Math authorities. Now also, do conduct yourself in like manner and pray to Sri Ramakrishna for your wellbeing. Our thinking and decisions are not always correct. That is why it is always safe to depend on Sri Ramakrishna. It is essential to remain content in whatever situation he places you in and to make an effort to realise that everything is happening according to his will. I pray to Sri Ramakrishna, that, by his grace, your sense of peace and contentment keeps growing day by day. The more you reflect upon the events of your past life, the more your faith, devotion, and surrender to God will increase. I repeat again that it is safe

to remain dependent on him, because our own intellect is of very limited power.

I am old now. My body has grown infirm. All my actions—eating, drinking, and moving about—are now dependent on others. Being in such a situation, I realise at every moment that there is no such thing as individual authority. When the body is strong, we think that things take place just as we wish. In this frail body, all the time I feel that he is pulling the strings and we are merely instruments in his hands. Only in the trials of life, the sense of self-surrender to God increases in the hearts of his devotees.

He wrote to another monk:

'*Satyameva jayate*; truth alone wins'—these are the words of the Vedas. It is the eternal religion. One's ascent and glory depend on truth, morality, and principles. Sri Ramakrishna's incarnation is for '*Sthapakaya cha dharmasya*; for the establishment of religion'—serving all as the veritable manifestations of the divine, establishing the religion of this age, and the formation of his holy Order and for the preaching of the betterment and the grand union of the whole humankind on the grounds of religion.

In another letter he wrote:

One should not entangle oneself in actions, but the attitude is: 'These are His manifold forms before thee / Rejecting them, where sleekest thou for God? / Who loves all beings without distinction / He indeed is worshipping best his God.'<sup>28</sup>

We have to sacrifice ourselves heart and soul for the service of the Lord. Any agenda of social development must be actively backed up by the government. But, we must be extremely careful, lest we should get deviated from our ideal. There should be discussions with learned members of the society also. Efficient workers are not available everywhere. With the expansion of our work, it is becoming gradually necessary to build up an efficient workers' base and to involve householder devotees, especially those who are leading a retired life, in our service activities.



From the very outset of 1988, Saradeshananda had been saying: 'How long in this old house [meaning his body]!' Especially one day, after Sri Ramakrishna's *tithi* puja, he said: 'Better if the body goes now. Living on in such an advanced age is hell. It's a suffering for me and for you also.' I asked him: 'Do you have any other difficulties other than these common physical problems of old age? We are attending to these as best as we can. On that score, it should not be that problematic. As for your arthritis, it is negligible nowadays. Do you, owing to these things, undergo any mental disquiet?' Maharaj replied: 'No. By Sri Ramakrishna's grace, I do not lack mental peace. And for arthritis, you all are massaging throughout the day!'

The erstwhile President of Sri Sarada Math, Pravrajika Mokshaprana used to visit Saradeshananda once in a year. When she came in April 1988, Saradeshananda told her: 'It is the last time. We shall not meet again.' Mokshaprana asked me: 'Why did he say so? Is he really that ill?' I replied: 'I can't also understand why he said so. He is keeping rather well now.' Later, when I asked him about it, he said: 'I said what came to my lips. Don't you see my health condition?' When I tried to put up a feeble argument that he was rather well at that period, he got annoyed, and said, 'Don't prattle nonsense!'

Saradeshananda had only one tooth remaining on the upper jaw. That also used to hang loosely. I wanted to get it removed a couple of times, but Maharaj was reluctant. He jokingly said: 'Do you know who has only one tooth? Astonished, I asked: 'Who else? Is there really anybody?' Then he recited the salutation mantra of Lord Ganesha: '*Ekadantam mahakayam*; the one with one tooth and a huge body.' I said: 'Then let it be. Otherwise we will lose all our *siddhis*!' In the Hindu tradition, Lord Ganesha is the deity responsible for granting *siddhi*, success in our endeavours. Often

I joked with him: 'As long as the tooth is there, you cannot go. You have to live a hundred years.'

On 24 April 1988, he suddenly said: 'Remove the tooth. While lying, I may swallow it inadvertently.' Immediately, a doctor was called, and the tooth, with a little tug, left its place unceremoniously, without any surgical intervention. I said: 'It seems we have to dismiss the idea of your hundred year's celebration!' He smilingly replied: 'No. I have no wish to live.'

Saradeshananda's health was quite good up to June. On 7 June, while taking bath, fragments of an electric bulb that suddenly burst, fell on him and as a result, he had blisters on a couple of spots on his body. After two days, on 9 June, he fell on the floor, when he was turning on his bed. There had not been any major injuries, by God's grace, except for a little cuts and bruises near his elbow.

On 9 July suddenly his right side was paralysed.



Eating and speech stopped. Though he seemed to have recovered in the night, again the right side got paralysed. This continued for a couple of times, and he stabilised afterwards. Next day morning, he had his normal breakfast, but he could not eat his lunch as the paralysis occurred again. In the afternoon, however, he became completely normal. The doctor suggested that he be taken to Delhi, but he refused. All possible check-ups were done in the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindavan. The tests showed that everything was fine. Rather, it seemed that his right side, which had always been somewhat weaker than the left, became stronger now, as if an old weakness was cured all of a sudden. After that he kept quite well for another fifteen days or so.

Towards the end of July he developed symptoms of anorexia. With much effort, we could feed him only a little. Continuing for a few more days in this condition, on 9 August, late at night, he started sweating and having severe chest pain. His limbs grew cold. ECG and all other tests were done and he was given oxygen for five to six days. Despite all the arrangements for medicines, it was an uphill task to make him agree to take them. Sometimes we had to struggle for three-four times to make him swallow a single tablet. Even though the doctor prescribed a regular checking of his blood pressure, he was particularly annoyed whenever any attempt was made to measure his blood pressure. He would say that he never had any blood pressure problem.

After spending a couple of weeks in good health, on the same date, the next month, that is, on 9 September, he fell ill once again with high fever and cough. Prescribed antibiotic medicines brought severe reactions and his whole face was swollen. It took almost ten to fifteen days to recover. Once I told the doctor: 'I become frightened whenever the calendar date 9 appears in a month, as if something was going to happen, because on

9 June, 9 July, 9 August, and 9 September, Gopeshananda fell severely ill. I shudder to think of the coming 9 October.' At this Dr Jones consoled me: 'No, you cannot afford to be weak now. You should not think like this. You should now be stronger even more.' Though Gopeshananda listened to us, he did not say anything. In fact, he hardly spoke at that time. He ate reluctantly. Every evening, a brahmachari sang the *aratiika*, vesper, songs for him. While listening to these songs, his mind seemed to have gone far away. We used to wonder if he was listening at all. If we happened to ask if he was listening, he would become annoyed and would say: 'Oh, you continue. Why do you speak? I'm listening.' But after the song was over, it would be found that he was lying quietly on his bed. After a few moments, he would perhaps ask: 'Did you not sing the *arati* today?' Then, the brahmachari would say: 'I sang, but you did not hear.' Then Gopeshananda would say: 'Sing again.'

With the arrival of October, I again had the foreboding that the date 9 of the month was approaching. On 2 October, I was talking with a monk seated on the veranda outside. Gopeshananda sent for me through one of his other brahmachari attendants. As I sat near him, he asked: 'What is the date today?' I said: 'Today is 2 October. Why are you suddenly asking for dates?' Without paying any attention to my words, he asked: 'When is the programme at the Delhi ashrama?' I replied: '6 to 14 October. Revered President Maharaj will come to Delhi on 7 October.' It was still not scheduled for Most Revered Swami Gambhirananda to come to Vrindavan. Most probably he came to Delhi on 7 October and inaugurated the newly built monks' quarters on the next day. Listening to everything, Gopeshananda said: 'So far off!' I asked him: 'What do you mean by "so far off"? It seems you're up to something! Are you going to attend the program? They will be extremely glad, if you go.'

Gopeshananda said: 'No, I'm thinking of something else. My health is not good and one never can tell what may happen! I don't want their programme to be disturbed.' Much taken aback, I said: 'Though your health was not that good in the past, you are quite well now. Yet, you are so concerned about dates! Are you sure that your body will pass away soon?'

Gopeshananda: Yes, I'm quite sure!

Me: Then tell me the date.

Gopeshananda: That I don't know. I only know that it's all over. Now I must go.

Me: Please tell me the date! I give you my word that I'll not tell anybody before your passing away. Unless you tell me, I will not let go of you.

Much as I was trying to carry on this conversation in a lighter mood, my heart, in grave apprehension, was being turned topsy-turvy.

Gopeshananda said: 'I tell you the truth. I don't know the date yet. But it is at most two months.' Finding me disconsolate, he changed the topic and said: 'Lift me up. I'll go to the bathroom.' Lost in thought, I became a little absentminded. Observing that I was not prompt in taking him to the bathroom, he jocosely said: 'Quick now! Otherwise I may wet my bed.' I felt somewhat relieved at this conversation, and thought that nothing would happen so soon, at least in the months of October and November, as he didn't wish the ensuing programmes to be disturbed.

This time onwards, he became so indrawn that he would hardly speak to anyone. Unless absolutely necessary, he would not even exchange words with the attendants. If much pressured to say something, he would say: 'No, not any more. I'll go. Mother, I come.' The constant refrain was: 'I will go.' One of his attendant brahmacharis plaintively complained to him: 'With so much hope, I've come to serve you and you keep on saying, "I'll go! I'll go!"' Hearing this, he just smiled. Gopeshananda had such a beatific

smile that we would be held enthralled. One would simply feel like not stop looking at him!

During this time, perhaps before 2 October, he told me: 'After my passing away you will get a leave.' I said: 'I'll go to the Himalayas then. It's been so long since I left home for the Himalayas. It's almost a decade now. Of course, for what I wanted to go to the Himalayas, I got all that here. .. But still, Sri Ramakrishna spoke highly of the Himalayas.'

Gopeshananda: 'No, after my passing away, do not go there. You'll have ample opportunities later.' When I tried to argue a little further, as my old desire rekindled, he firmly said: 'If you would listen to me, don't go. But if you don't, do whatever you like. I have nothing to say.'

Me: 'Then please tell me, where shall I go? I'll do accordingly.'

Gopeshananda: 'Go to Belur Math first. Then from there, go to the birthplaces of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi. Also, visit the places associated with the hallowed memories of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Spend a couple of days in each of these places.'

Me: 'You please tell our Secretary swami then.'

Gopeshananda: 'You'll definitely get leave. There's no need to tell anybody. The Belur Math authorities grant leave to those who serve elderly monks for a long time.'

At that very instant, as our conversation was coming to a close, the Secretary swami entered the room, and found me talking close to Saradeshananda's ears. He asked him: 'What are you discussing with your attendant so secretly?' I explained everything to him.

On 7 or 8 October, the then President of the Order, Most Revered Swami Gambhirananda and Swami Swahananda reached Delhi, and after taking a couple of days' rest there, came to Vrindavan. Swami Saradeshananda almost stopped

talking after 2 or 3 October. He did not talk with Revered President swamiji either. Gambhirananda conveyed to him some news of our Order. Gambhirananda was in Vrindavan for about twenty-four hours. When he was taking leave, Saradeshananda only muttered, 'Durga! Durga!', touching his own forehead with folded hands.

Saradeshananda was quite fond of Swami Swahananda. Swahananda went to Delhi with Gambhirananda, but as soon as the inauguration of the monks' quarters was over, he returned to Vrindavan to spend time with Saradeshananda, which was, indeed the very purpose of his coming to India. But it was very strange to see that Saradeshananda hardly exchanged any words with Swahananda with whom he used to talk for hours at a time.

Swahananda stayed in Vrindavan for 3-4 days. Every now and then he would come to Saradeshananda's room, only to meet with an awkward silence. His eyes grew heavy with sorrow. Unable to bear this, I pleaded with Saradeshananda repeatedly: 'He has come to see you for the last time, from such a distant place! Please speak a little. I am sure he will not meet you again.'

Swahananda was listening to our conversation. He told me: 'If he doesn't feel like talking anymore, don't trouble him.' I said: 'If he speaks, we'll also feel happy.' Saradeshananda then softly spoke to Swahananda: 'Are you all keeping well? Please convey my love and namaskars to all.' When Swahananda took his leave, Saradeshananda muttered: 'Durga! Durga!'

After that, except for exchanging a few words with me, he hardly spoke with anybody. Nobody dared to approach him. He kept on lying on his bed quietly, with his hands folded on his chest. An ineffable bliss permeated his face. He did not want to take food at that time. If we insisted, he would say: 'My eating is over for good. The mind is off such things.' He would eat a little

if something was put in his mouth, but sometimes that too would just roll down the side of his mouth. Almost two months—October and November—went in this manner.

That dreaded date, 9 December, was nearing. Lest I should be laughed at, I did not share my apprehension with anyone except for a few intimate ones. On 8 December, the attendant of Swami Kailashananda, Dhruva Maharaj and Shashikanta Maharaj aka Swami Bhagavatananda came to visit him. Despite the rare possibility of getting a word out of him, I tried my best to make him speak: 'Dhruva Maharaj, the attendant of Kailashananda is offering his pranams. Do you remember him?' Maharaj expressed his assent by merely moving his eyelids. When I said, 'Please bless them!', he raised his hands a little, and touched Dhruva Maharaj and Shashikanta Maharaj's heads, as they drew nearer. They were the last to receive his blessings.

On that very day, a huge earthquake shook Armenia. Thousands died and thousands more were rendered homeless. When he got up at about eleven o'clock in the night, I gave him the news. He merely smiled, but did not say anything. Generally, he would ask for a detailed description of this sort of news, but now he appeared totally indifferent.

After that, I turned him to the side facing the wall and lit the night lamp. I stood behind his head to watch what he did. A few moments later, I noticed him gazing intently at the photo of Sri Ramakrishna hanging on the wall and his right hand resting quietly on the pillow. He was moving his thumb over the fingers as if doing *japa*. I slowly approached him and said: 'What are you doing? Is it time for *japa*? Please sleep a little now. You'll do *japa* after you wake up.'

Hearing my voice, he was, at first, somewhat startled and then started smiling like a child caught doing mischief. Then in an attempt to




shut his eyes fast, he started blinking comically. I slowly closed his eyelids and straightened his palms. I stood near his bed and finding him opening his eyes again, I said in mock-seriousness: 'I'm standing right here!' Then closing his eyes immediately, he started smiling. A little later, seeing him fall asleep I moved to my bed. It was almost twelve o'clock and the thought that kept bobbing up in my mind was: there would come the ninth of this month just after twelve o'clock tonight.

Usually, he got up at an interval of two hours for urination. When it was almost 1.30 a.m. in the morning and yet he did not call me, I went to him to enquire if he needed anything. He stared at me without any reply. I placed my hand on his and discovered that his right hand was numb. As soon as I touched his left hand, he grasped my hand as if trying to say something. I asked: 'Would you get up?' He gestured with his eyes to get him up. I tried, but it was impossible for me to lift him up alone. Slowly laying him down, I called for the other attendant and sent him to fetch the doctor. The doctor came at once and examined him. Initially his blood pressure was alright, but the doctor instructed us to keep an eye on it as his blood pressure and pulse could go up anytime. A few moments later, I noticed that his blood pressure was extremely high and the pulse-rate also was very fast. The doctor administered injections. Half an hour later, his left side, which was quite fine till then, started paralysing. He lost all outward consciousness.

The whole of 10 December went like this. At night, we heard him groan a little. Possibly, it was because of stomach pain due to an accumulation of urine in the bladder. On the eleventh, the doctor asked us to bring a catheter. Before we could bring it, we heard some rattling noise coming out of his throat. Immediately, we tried to clear it up with a suction machine, but the doctor arrived by then. Suddenly, his breathing stopped

but he breathed again after some time. When again after a long time he breathed, the doctor was astonished. The doctor closely watched the intervals between two breaths. Suddenly, all the hairs on his head and beard—it was shaved only five-seven days ago—stood on their ends. When he was not seen breathing for almost three-four minutes, the doctor examined him and told: 'He is gone. *What a peaceful death!* I have not seen anything like this before!' His eyes were filled with tears and he left the room. On 11 December 1988 at 9:07 a.m., Saradeshananda finally took shelter in the Mother's lap.

In accordance with the tradition of Vrindavan, his mortal body was immersed in the holy waters of Yamuna that evening. 

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25. *Shiva Gita*, 11.27.
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28. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), 4.496.



# BALABODHA

*Ancient Wisdom Made Easy*

## Samadhi

**S**AMADHI IS the commonly used Sanskrit word that means a high state of meditation when outward consciousness is lost. It is considered to be the last stage of meditation or spiritual life. Therefore, it is necessary to know the detailed meaning of this word. This is a Sanskrit word. Sanskrit is a classical language like Greek, Latin, and Persian. And in Sanskrit, as in most classical languages, most words are derived from a stem or root.

The word 'samadhi' has been derived from the root word *dha*, which means to put, place, set, lay, bestow, impart, or present. The word 'samadhi' means placing together, joining, combining, union, completion, concentration, attention, or agreement. In spiritual life, 'samadhi' is a state of meditation when the meditator and the meditated merge. There is no thought process at this stage. This is considered the highest state of meditation and the best state of a calm mind. This is also the highest state of concentration, where the object concentrated upon and the person who is concentrating become one. In this state of meditation, the difference between one's self and the object being meditated upon is completely removed.

The Upanishads require one to refrain from needless activity, restraint of speech, body, and mind in renunciation and forbearance and patient bearing of all hardships of spiritual life, before one can attain samadhi. One can attain one's true nature, the Atman, only through samadhi. However, samadhi can be brought about by

following any one of the four yogas propounded by Swami Vivekananda: raja, karma, bhakti, and jnana. One can attain samadhi by following the different stages of the practice of raja yoga or psychic control. One can attain samadhi also by performing selfless action as envisaged by Swamiji in karma yoga. So is the case with bhakti and jnana yoga.

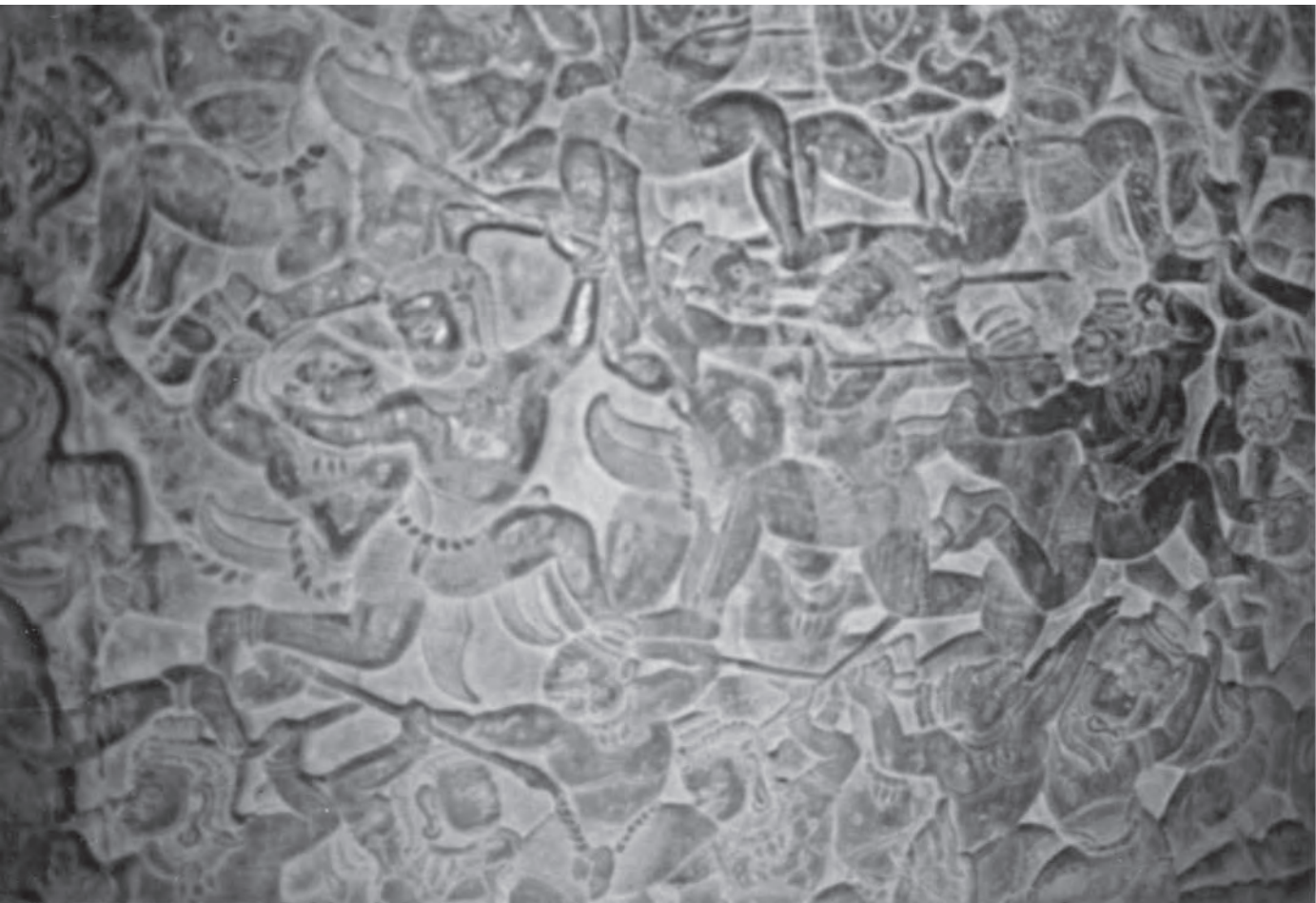
In samadhi the mind loses cognition of all other objects, including the cognition that one is meditating. In this state, the mind is so engrossed with the object of meditation that nothing else is cognised. Samadhi also means going beyond the three states of awareness of waking, dreaming, and sleeping. In the state of samadhi, the ego is completely destroyed. Then, the mind ceases to exist and is merged into a state that is beyond the mind and the ego, where the self loses its consciousness. Samadhi converts one from a normal person to one who is enlightened and has broken free of the fetters of the bondage of transmigration.

Samadhi involves transcending the cycle of cause and effect and also the narrow realm of reason or logic. Nothing is logical with samadhi. The body almost entirely stops its metabolic activities, yet the person does not die. There is no thought in that state, and yet the person returns as a person with complete and uninterrupted clarity of thought and a very clear worldview. Samadhi can thus be termed as a state that is beyond logic, beyond awareness, and beyond thoughts.

 PB

# TRADITIONAL TALES

## *The Humbling of Hanuman*



*Angkor Wat—Bas-relief of Hanuman Attacking Ravana's Army*

**A**FTER BURNING THE ENTIRE LANKA, Hanuman, the king of speech, was returning to meet Sri Rama. Then, his mind analysed the events that had just taken place: 'Oh! How much work have I done! I crossed the ocean, found out Sita, I killed Ravana's son and talked to Ravana himself, I burned Lanka and ruthlessly beat the asuras.' Thinking all this, Hanuman's heart swelled with pride. Sri

Rama immediately became aware of this change in Hanuman's mind.

Hanuman could not contain himself, recounting his heroic deeds. Hence, he was returning with a loud roar, brimming with joy. On the way, he suddenly felt thirsty. He felt that it was impossible to continue the journey without drinking water. He halted immediately. That place was Mahendra Hill. Hanuman looked

around in all directions to see if there was some waterbody nearby. But, he could not locate any source of water. However, he saw a sage, who was the embodiment of peace, sitting at some distance from there.

Hanuman approached the sage and saluted him. He said: 'O sage! I am returning after doing my work of finding Sita for Sri Rama. I am feeling very thirsty now. Kindly give me some water to drink or please show me where the nearest waterbody is located. I will go myself and drink water from there.'

The sage remained silent. With a smile, he pointed at the direction of the waterbody. Hanuman understood the sign and with great joy, set on the search for water. Before leaving, he took out the crown-jewel that Sita had given him, the seal-ring of Sri Rama, and a letter from Brahma, and placed all three before the sage, and proceeded to drink water.

In some time, another monkey came to the sage. It took the three things that Hanuman had placed before the sage, and put them in the sage's water-pot, *kamandalu*, and ran from there. The sage saw this too with a smile.

Having quenched his thirst, Hanuman returned to the sage. Not seeing the three articles that he had placed before the sage, he


was shocked and asked the sage: 'Sir, where are the things that I had kept here?' The sage did not speak even then, but raised his brows and pointed towards the *kamandalu*. Hanuman was amazed when he looked into the *kamandalu*; he found thousands of seal-rings just like the one he had left there. At this, Hanuman got confused and asked the sage: 'Sir, among these seal-rings, which is the seal-ring that I left here?'

Without getting disturbed in the least, the sage told with his characteristic smile: 'O child! In all ages when Sri Rama incarnates and Ravana kidnaps Sita, it is a regular practice that when Hanuman returns after seeing Sita, he puts the seal-ring in my *kamandalu*. Those are the rings that you now see in the *kamandalu*.'

Hearing this, Hanuman's pride got terribly crushed. Ashamed, he said to the sage: 'Sir, till now, how many Ramas have incarnated?'

The sage replied: 'O child! You would know that by counting the seal-rings in my *kamandalu*.' Hanuman understood that it was impossible to count them and thought: 'How many persons like me have done this work before me! What have I done so special and different from them?' Thinking thus, he proceeded towards Angada's abode.

Later, Hanuman, along with Angada, went to Sri Rama and saluted him. Hanuman said: 'O Lord! I have committed a great blunder!' Saying this, he recounted the incident with the sage in detail. Hearing the whole incident, Sri Rama laughingly said: 'My child! It was I who did all this in the form of a sage for your own good. Don't be upset, see this!' In his hand was shining the seal-ring that Hanuman had left with the sage!

The humbled Hanuman saw the complete form of Lord Vishnu in Sri Rama. His heart melted and Hanuman fell flat at the feet of Sri Rama. He did not rise for a long time. After this, under no circumstance could pride enter Hanuman. 

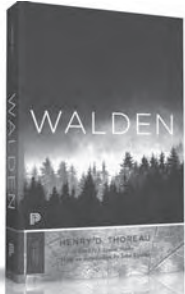
Champa Cave and Hanuman Temple at Mt Abu





# REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,  
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



## **Walden**

Henry D Thoreau,  
Ed. J Lyndon Shanley

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540-5237, USA. [www.press.princeton.edu](http://www.press.princeton.edu). 2016. \$9.95. 384 pp. PB. ISBN 9780691169347.

We have commodity fetish and archive fever. We do not understand that we will sooner or later lay waste our powers and know not when the centres of our volitions shift(ed)! We are in the restless economy of the Pharaoh who wants us to work constantly and be productive; this contrasts with the economy of God which is based on replenishment and love. God's covenant love for us takes care of our daily needs without birthing anxiety and exhaustion. God's love is countercultural, subversive, and expansive. While we conform within human economies constituted of the inhuman, the posthuman and other logics of postmodernism qua endisms like those of Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, and Francis Fukuyama; within God's economy of covenant love, we can be truly ourselves: not rats or inhuman in rat, or inhuman races: 'Men of business ... thought only of ... the great distance at which I [Henry D Thoreau] dwelt from something or other; and though they said that they loved a ramble in the woods occasionally, it was obvious they did not. Restless committed men, whose time was all taken up in getting a living or keeping it; ministers who spoke of God as if they enjoyed a monopoly of the subject ... young men [who came to Walden] who had ceased to be young, and had concluded that it was safest to follow the beaten track' (153).

Thoreau has not dated—the *nouveau riche* ask restless people how is it possible not to work all the time? The self-help books this *nouveau riche* use as *techne* to become oligarchs enforce the sadistic WASP work ethic, which is a repetition of

the Pharaoh's work ethics as found in *Exodus* in the Old Testament. Thoreau's counter-culturalism and counter-normativity influenced everyone from Emily Dickinson to Robert Frost to Jack Kerouac to Allen Ginsberg. *Walden* is a peaceful read in an age where it is impossible to understand why Yeats will go to Innisfree with mayhap a fairy hand in hand since this world's too disturbing for us to understand. Therefore, it is only fitting that the late John Updike of the Rabbit series of novels' fame introduces us to *Walden*. Due to our obsession with hoarding arising out of commodity fetish, Updike writes that the book *Walden* 'itself risks being as revered and unread as the Bible ... In a time of information overload, of clamorously inane and ubiquitous electronic entertainment' *Walden* is all the more important as a tour de force of resistance. '*Walden* can be taken as an antidote to apathy and anxiety'.

Updike makes a very original observation—unlike other Transcendentalists, Thoreau 'could do things'. This ability to be practical yet seek *eudaimonia* is what we need today in an age when cyborgs have taken over. By printing this edition, Princeton University Press helps us with arsenal to resist the seduction of the inhuman. As Updike mentions in his 'Introduction', worldly philosophers and economists will be disappointed that Thoreau overcame economic normativity and resisted creating any coherent economic structure of his own. No wonder Thoreau had a great effect on monasticism in the West.

The greatest danger to monasticism and the solitary life is not consumerism but the ease with which the Internet connects all of us every day in a breathless gush of often, useless gush. It becomes imperative to be on social media, to be connected through social networking software and other inhuman modes of connection. What we are losing is the peace that comes through God—Thoreau restores this peace that surpasses understating.

This reviewer is indebted to William Wordsworth, W B Yeats, W H Auden, and Walter Brueggemann.

*Subhasis Chattopadhyay*

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***Hindu Rashtra: Vedic Ideals in Modern Awakening***

Sadhu Prof V Rangarajan

Bharatamata Gurukula Ashram and Yogi Ramsuratkumar Indological Research Centre, Sister Nivedita Academy, 'Sri Bharati Mandir', Srinivasanagar, Kithaganur Main Road, Krishnarajapuram, Bengaluru 560036. [www.sribharatamatamandir.org](http://www.sribharatamatamandir.org). 2016. ₹60. 80 pp. PB.

The slim book under review proudly celebrates the spiritualised nationalism of India that originates from the well-spring of Vedic ethos and is gloriously practised by a galaxy of saintly Indian leaders in uninterrupted continuity. The fact of the mantle of mentorship having naturally fallen on India by virtue of her grounding in Vedic traditions is pointed out. Her unique mission of educating the world in the verities of Vedantic gospel and in the art of reconciling the claims of enlightened nationalism with the needs of internationalism is highlighted.

The book has five chapters. A brief introduction forms the content of the first chapter. The three elements that characterise India's nationality are shown as: 1. The worship of the motherland as the land of immortality and divinity. 2. The espousal of Sanatana Dharma. 3. The spirit of patriotism.

In the second chapter titled 'Ideals of the Vedic nation', quotations from Vedas, Puranas, Kavyas, and other treatises are given to explain and establish the three propositions made in the first chapter. The three elements enumerated are not disparate elements but form one organic whole. The reverential conception of the motherland as immortal and divine might, in the absence of the sustaining metaphysics of Sanatana Dharma with its integral perspective, erupt as the injurious fire of national bigotry. Desiccated spirit of patriotism bereft of the sublimating idea of divinity of

the motherland is, at best, vacuous emotionalism.

In the third chapter titled 'The National Awakening and the Renaissance', the tale of Hindu Nationalism in the pre-renaissance period is narrated with passion. The vital roles played by such noble souls as Chhatrapati Shivaji, Samarth Ramdas, Rana Pratap Singh, Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee—the seer of *Vande Mataram*, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, and Sir John Woodroffe, the Englishman who turned into a worshipper of the *mahashakti* in fostering Indian nationalism, are pinpointed with lucidity and brevity.

The fourth chapter titled 'India's Struggle for Freedom', records the signal contributions to India's struggle for freedom made by Aurobindo, Sister Nivedita, the Irish woman who had her spiritual tutelage at the feet of Swami Vivekananda and Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, a Hindu monk whose chosen preceptor was Jesus Christ. This chapter also chronicles the inspiring story of the decisive parts played by such missionaries of Swaraj as Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, the fiery orator, and Lala Lajpat Rai. The unearthly love of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar for a Hindu nation is highlighted in this chapter. This chapter mentions the tremendous services rendered to the motherland by the messiahs of Swadeshi. Such stalwarts as Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Bannerjee, Mahadev Govinda Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, and Annie Besant are dealt with in this chapter. Among the poets of national awakening, reference is made to Rabindranath Tagore, Subramania Bharati, and Sarojini Naidu, the nightingale of India. This chapter hails Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as the hero of the final battle and relates the story of his memorable contributions to the freedom struggle.

The concluding chapter, the fifth chapter, ends the narrative on the inspiring note of handsome encomiums paid to Mother India for her undying glory and her stalwarts for their spirit of exemplary patriotism sanctified by religious fervour.

The sections on 'Notes and References' and 'Select Bibliography' enhance the value of the book.

*N Hariharan*  
Madurai

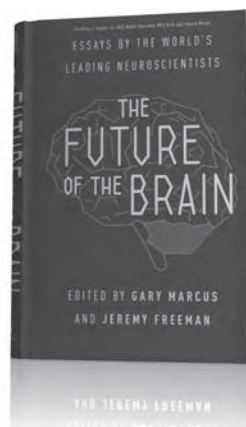
# MANANA

**Exploring thought-currents from around the world.  
Extracts from a thought-provoking book every month.**

## ***The Future of the Brain***

Eds. Gary Marcus and Jeremy Freeman

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. USA. 2015. xiii + 284 pp. \$24.95. HB. ISBN 9780691162768.



THERE'S NEVER BEEN a more exciting moment in neuroscience than now. Although the field has existed for two centuries, going back to the days of Phineas Gage and the tamping iron that exploded through his left frontal lobe, progress has in many ways been slow. At present, neuroscience is a collection of facts, still awaiting on overarching theory; if there has been plenty of progress, there is even more that we don't know. But a confluence of new technologies, many described in this book, may soon change that.

To be sure, there is long history of advances, even from the earliest days, often leveraging remarkably crude tools to great effect. In the mid-1800s Paul Broca got the first glimpse into the underpinnings of language by doing autopsies on people who had lost linguistic function because of brain damage to specific cortical areas. Near the end of the nineteenth century, Camillo Golgi discovered that he could visualize neurons under a microscope by staining them with silver nitrate, and Santiago Ramón y Cajal used the technique to develop remarkably prescient characterizations of neuronal structure and function. In 1909 a brilliant ophthalmologist named Tatsuji Inouye launched functional brain mapping, by methodically studying victims of gunshot wounds during Russo-Japanese war, noting that wounds to the visual cortex impaired his patients' vision, and wounds to particular

locations affected vision in *particular* regions of the visual field.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, noninvasive forms of brain imaging, like functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), came on the scene. But as useful as such tools are, current noninvasive techniques are like fuzzy microscopes; they blur the fine details of neural activity in both space and time. Ultimately, looking at an fMRI scan is like looking at a tiny pixelated version of a detailed, high-resolution photograph.

In nonhuman animals, which can be studied with more invasive techniques, the gold standard until recently was the 'single neuron recording,' which uses thin electrodes to monitor the electrical activity associated with neural firing. Action potentials are the currency of the brain, and directly measuring them has led to many fundamental insights, such as Hubel and Weisel's discovery that neurons in the visual cortex are 'tuned' or selective for particular visual features. But looking at one neuron at a time tells an incomplete story at best; the neuroscientist Rafael Yuste has likened it to 'understanding a television program by looking at a single pixel.'

As we write this, it is clear that neuroscience is undergoing a revolution. Optogenetics, introduced in 2005, makes it possible to engineer neurons that literally light up when active, switching them on and off with a laser; multielectrode

recordings, which allow recordings from hundreds or even thousands of neurons are finally becoming practical, and new forms of microscopy can record the activity of nearly every neuron in a living, transparent fish. For the first time, it is realistic to think that we might observe the brain at the level of its elementary parts.


Still, three fundamental truths make the brain more challenging to understand than any other biological system.

First is sheer numbers. Even in the fly or the larval zebrafish brain there are one hundred thousand neurons. In the human brain there are over 85 billion. On top of that, the word *neuron* makes it sound like there is only one kind, whereas in fact there are several hundred kinds, possibly more, each with distinctive physical characteristics, and, likely, computational functions. Second, we have yet to discover many of the organizing principles that govern all that complexity. We don't know, for example, if the brain uses anything as systematic as, say, the widespread ASCII encoding scheme that computers use for encoding words. And we are still shaky on fundamentals like how the brain stores memories and sequences events over time. Third, many of the behaviors that seem characteristically human—like language, reasoning, and the acquisition of complex culture—don't have straightforward animal models.

The Obama BRAIN initiative, the European Human Brain Project, and other large-scale programs that may begin in Asia aim to address some of the challenges in understanding the brain. It seems reasonable that we can expect, over the next decade, an enormous amount of new data at an unprecedented level of detail, certainly in animals, and perhaps in humans as well. But these new data will raise new questions of their own. How can researchers possibly make sense of the expected onslaught of data? How will we be able to derive general principles?

And for that matter, will collecting all these data be enough? How can we scale up data analysis to the terabytes to come, and how can we build a bridge from data to genuine insight? We suggest that one key focus must be on computation. The brain is not a laptop, but presumably it is an information processor of some kind, taking in inputs from the world and transforming them into models of the world and instructions to the motor systems that control our bodies and our voices. Although many neuroscientists might take for granted that the principal process by which the brain does its work is some form of computation, almost all agree that the most foundational properties of neural computation have yet to be discovered. Our hope is that computation can provide a universal language for describing the action of the brain, especially as theorists and experimentalists come closer together in their quest.

Given the complexity of the brain, there is no certainty we will come to fully or even largely understand the brain's dynamics anytime soon; in truth, there is reason for hope, but no guarantees. This book, with chapters by pioneers like Christof Koch and George Church, represents our best guesses—and our esteemed contributors' best guesses—about where we are going, what we are likely to find out, and how we might get there.

But it also admits where we might stumble along the way. If this book is a reader's guide to the future, it's not a foolproof crystal ball; if anything, it's more like a time capsule. Part of the fun will be for scientists, policy makers, and the public to come back to these essays a decade hence, to, as one colleague put it, 'reassess its scientific claims, aspirations, and methodological promises, and adjust the aspirations of the next generation of neuroscientific endeavors accordingly.' We couldn't agree more. 



# REPORTS

## ***Swachchha Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign)***

As a part of the third phase of Swachchha Mangaluru, **Mangaluru Ashrama** conducted 65 cleaning drives in and around Mangaluru on four Sundays between 4 and 25 December 2016. In all, about 7,000 volunteers participated in these drives. Mangaluru centre conducted altogether 46 cleaning drives in and around Mangaluru on the five Sundays in January 2017. In all, 6,500 volunteers actively participated in these drives.

**Varanasi Home of Service** carried out a cleanliness drive on 18 December, 50 people took part. An awareness rally was also conducted, attended by 350 people. The centre carried out a cleanliness drive on 15 January in which 45 people took part. A rally, attended by 300 people, was also taken out to create awareness about cleanliness.

**Coimbatore Mission Vidyalaya** conducted four cleaning drives in January in which Vidyalaya students cleaned a few public places including a temple, a hospital, and a government office.

**Kamarpukur** centre carried out three cleanliness drives from November to January in which monks, employees, and volunteers participated.

**Mysuru Ashrama** launched Swachchha Mysuru Swachchha Jeevana programme on 29 January to bring public awareness about cleanliness and environmental protection. A team of 230 volunteers and 80 students carried out cleanliness and awareness drive at 7 localities in the city that day.

## ***National Youth Day Celebrations***

The following 94 centres and the **Headquarters**, along with **Saradapitha**, celebrated the National Youth Day, 12 January 2017, with great enthusiasm, by holding various programmes such as

processions, youths' conventions, speeches, and cultural competitions: **Aalo, Agartala, Allahabad, Almora, Antpur, Asansol, Baranagar Math, Baranagar Mission, Belgaum, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chandipur, Chapra, Chengalpattu, Chennai Math, Chennai Mission Ashrama, Chennai Students' Home, Coimbatore Math, Coimbatore Mission, Contai, Cooch Behar, Dehradun, Delhi, Deoghar, Gadadhar Ashrama, Ghatshila, Gurap, Guwahati, Hatamuniguda, Hyderabad, Itanagar, Jaipur, Jalpaiguri, Jammu, Jamshedpur, Kadapa, Kailashahar, Kalady, Kamarpukur, Kanchipuram, Kanpur, Katihar, Khetri, Kochi, Koyilandy, Limbdi, Lucknow, Madurai, Malda, Manasadwip, Mangaluru, Medinipur, Mekhliganj, Mumbai, Muzaffarpur, Mysuru, Nagpur, Naora, Narainpur, Narendrapur, Narottam Nagar, Nattarampalli, Patna, Ponnampet, Porbandar, Port Blair, Pune, Puri Math, Puri Mission, Purulia along with Bagda, Raipur, Rajamahendravaram, Rajkot, Ramanathapuram, Ramharipur, Ranchi Morabadi, Salem, Sargachhi, Seva Pratishthan, Shillong, Silchar, Swamiji's Ancestral House, Taki, Tamruk, Thrissur, Tirupati, Vadodara, Varanasi Home of Service, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Vrindaban.** Cultural competitions held by the following centres deserve special mention: **Chennai Math:** 43,000 students from 410 schools and 30 colleges participated; **Madurai:** 16,412 students from 178 educational institutions participated; **Muzaffarpur:** 5,000 students from 40 schools and colleges participated; **Nagpur:** 5,394 students from 60 schools located in 31 villages participated; **Rajkot:** 8,147 students from 160 schools and colleges participated.

### **Celebration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj**

Swamiji's Ancestral House conducted a special lecture on 17 January which was attended by about 300 people.

Vadodara centre held a public meeting on the Ashrama premises on 29 January in which Srimat Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, delivered a speech of benediction. About 150 people attended the meeting.

### **Celebration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Saradanandaji Maharaj**

Lucknow centre conducted a public meeting, a spiritual retreat, and a programme for youths on 4 and 8 January which were attended by about 300 devotees and 400 youths.

### **Relief**

**Distress Relief:** The following centres distributed various items to needy people: **Aurangabad:** 2,152 shirts and 2,152 pants from 6 October to 3 January. **Bagda:** 2,238 shirts, 316 tops, and 3,760 pants from 28 November to 4 January. **Baghbazar:** 1,175 shirts and 3,325 pants from 1 November to 17 January. **Burdwan (Headquarters):** 1,006 shirts, 1,005 pants, and 45 plates from 16 December to 22 January. **Chandigarh:** 620 tops and 2,000 pairs of socks from 19 November to 18 December. **Chapra:** 207 shirts, 414 pants, 238 T-shirts, and 435 tops from 22 December to 3 January. **Cooch Behar:** 410 shirts, 475 tops, and 510 pants in the month of January. **Darjeeling:** 29,685 shirts, 22,759 pants, 9,935 tops, 409 saris, and 4,339 other ladies garments from 15 August to 3 January. **Deoghar:** 3,329 shirts and 1,827 pants from 5 to 31 December. **Ghatshila:** 1,626 shirts, 1,110 tops, 1,201 T-shirts, 2,515 pants, and 2,000 pairs of socks from 15 October

to 8 January. **Jamshedpur:** 515 shirts, 834 tops, 272 pants, and 400 pairs of socks from 5 to 31 December. **Kankurgachhi:** 446 shirts, 1,328 tops, and 339 pants from 13 November to 9 January. **Koyilandy:** 2,255 shirts and 1,510 pants on 31 December and 1 January. **Lucknow:** 6,041 shirts and 3,133 pants from 11 to 26 December. **Mangaluru:** 2,041 shirts, 1,940 tops, and 2,228 pants from 13 to 25 January. **Mysuru:** 2,073 shirts, 1,457 T-shirts, 340 leggings, 245 tunics, 2,314 pants, 734 tops, 30 saris, and other ladies garments from 15 October to 13 January. **Nagpur:** 7,883 shirts, 216 T-shirts, and 4,903 pants from 3 September to 18 January. **Naora:** 1,800 exercise books, 1,200 pens, 600 pencils, 600 erasers, and 600 sharpeners on 12 January. **Narottam Nagar:** 175 shirts, 945 pants, 1,047 T-shirts, 822 tops, and 1,489 pairs of socks from 5 to 27 January. **Patna:** 1,250 shirts, 1,610 tops, and 1,840 pants from 29 October to 10 January. **Pune:** 1,920 shirts and 2,047 pants from 2 October to 16 December. **Puri Math:** 1,553 shirts and 1,517 pants from 24 November to 14 January. **Purulia:** 3,981 T-shirts, 432 tops, and 4,260 pants from 7 November to 3 January. **Rajamahendravaram:** 60 saris and 26 dhotis on 20 December. **Rajkot:** 7,707 ladies garments and 8,875 gents garments from 26 July to 1 October. **Ramharipur:** 850 shirts, 790 tops, and 741 pants from 11 September to 17 December. **Ranchi Morabadi:** 5,000 tops and 2,500 pants from 21 September to 15 January. **Ranchi Sanatorium:** 3,380 shirts and 1,980 tops from 26 November to 13 January. **Sargachhi:** 4,176 shirts, 2,324 pants, and 1,000 pairs of socks from 11 November to 18 January. **Shyamla Tal:** 846 shirts, 134 T-shirts, 976 tops, and 3,001 pants from 30 September to 14 December. **Vadodara:** 200 notebooks and 50 sketch pen sets on 31 December. **Visakhapatnam:** 4,600 shirts, 2,490 T-shirts, 2,576 tops, and 7365 pants from 3 September to 3 November. **Vrindaban:** 1,600 dhotis, 1,600 pairs of socks, 1,600 phials of hair oil, and 3,200 bars of soap on 20 December.





# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

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## Title Index

### A

About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita—  
*Sarada Sarkar* ... 779

### B

Balabodha: Bhakti ... 566  
Balabodha: Dharma... 380  
Balabodha: Dhyana ... 766  
Balabodha: Jnana ... 525  
Balabodha: Karma ... 477  
Balabodha: Manana... 666  
Balabodha: Nididhyasana ... 712  
Balabodha: Samadhi ... 814  
Balabodha: Shraddha ... 429  
Balabodha: Shrivana ... 618  
Balabodha: Vedanta... 330  
Breakfast with the Sisters: A Meeting of Great Minds—*Pravrajika Shuddhatmaprana* 71

### C

Cultural Heritage of India, The—*Zhu Wenxin* ... 594

### D

Danger, Beauty, and God-Intoxication: A Journey to Amarnath—  
*Elizabeth Usha Harding* ... 316  
Dedicated Sister and the Three Great Sons of Mother India, A—  
*Dr Saroj Upadhyay and Mrs Sudeshna Gupta* ... 254  
Drawn into the Orbit of the New Buddha—*Swami Atmarupananda* ... 24

**E**Editorial—*Swami Narasimhananda*

All Improvement is False ... ..	729
Becoming One with the Audience ... ..	633
Decline of Higher Thinking, The ... ..	393
Defining Death ... ..	681
Desire to Know, The ... ..	441
Inner Development, The ... ..	777
Mild Hindu, The ... ..	297
Problem of Plenty, The ... ..	585
Religious Education ... ..	345
Sister Nivedita: Vajra Shakti ... ..	3
Transcending Activity ... ..	489
Transcending Desires ... ..	537
Education for India: In the Footsteps of Sister Nivedita, An— <i>Arpita Mitra</i> ... ..	235
Elements in Sister Nivedita's Educational Vision— <i>Vinayak Lohani</i> ... ..	788
Essence of the Bhagavadgita and its Significance, The— <i>Swami Tyagishananda</i> ... ..	347

**F**

## Fighter Extraordinary: Sister Nivedita and Her Indian Struggles—

<i>Dr Anil Baran Ray and Dr Sukanya Ray</i> ... ..	168
Finding Nivedita from a Scottish Point of View— <i>Murdo Macdonald</i> ... ..	161

**G**

## Gems of Memories: Reminiscences of Swami Saradeshananda—

<i>Swami Shuklatmananda</i> ... ..	459, 515, 551, 603, 654, 706, 739, 805
Giant Dance of Shiva, The— <i>Shruti Bidwaikar</i> ... ..	539
God and World According to Spinoza and Vedanta— <i>Arun Chatterjee</i> ... ..	500

**H**

Holy Mother and Sister Nivedita— <i>Swami Chetanananda</i> ... ..	13
---	----

**I**

## Imperial Japanese Visitor in Colonial India—

Exchange, Resistance, and Formations of Asian Modernity, An— <i>Gita V Pai</i> ... ..	185
In Memoriam: Huston Smith— <i>Swami Chetanananda</i> ... ..	591
Indian Women in the Letters of Sister Nivedita— <i>Dr Suruchi Pande</i> ... ..	90
'Irishness' of Margaret Noble/Sister Nivedita, The— <i>Gwilym Beckerlegge</i> ... ..	118

**M**

Mahasamadhi of Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj ... ..	587
Manana ... ..	290, 339, 385, 435, 483, 531, 579, 627, 675, 723, 771, 819
Mandukya Upanishad— <i>Swami Ranganathananda</i> ... ..	360, 405, 465
Myth and Mythic Themes— <i>Dr Sanjukta Bhattacharyya</i> ... ..	544



**N**

New President of the Ramakrishna Order: Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj...	635
Nicola Barker: An Interview about The Cauliflower— <i>Nicola Barker and Swami Narasimhananda</i> ... ..	304
Nivedita— <i>Malachi O’ Doherty</i> ... ..	224
Nivedita and Her Times— <i>Somenath Mukherjee</i> ... ..	137
Nivedita: A Blend of Strength and Softness— <i>Swami Kritarthananda</i> ... ..	42
Nivedita: A Great Wonder— <i>Swami Chetanananda</i> ... ..	491
No Room at the Inn in Baltimore— <i>Diane Marshall</i> ... ..	443

**O**

On and About Sister Nivedita and Her Family— <i>Sarada Sarkar</i> ... ..	731
On Sister Nivedita— <i>Vijaya Bharati</i> ... ..	263
On Sister Nivedita— <i>Lalitha Bharati</i> ... ..	265

**R**

Reflections on Hinduphobia: A Perspective from a Scholar-Practitioner— <i>Jeffery D Long</i> ... ..	797
Reflections on Vedanta and Science— <i>Siddhartha Sen</i> ... ..	642
Reports ... .. 292, 341, 387, 437, 485, 533, 581, 629, 677, 725, 773, 821	
Review Article: On World Religions: Diversity, Not Dissension— <i>Prof. M Sivaramkrishna</i> ... ..	424
Review Article: The Cauliflower: A Novel— <i>Prof. M Sivaramkrishna</i> ... ..	333
Reviews ... .. 288, 337, 383, 432, 480, 528, 569, 621, 669, 715, 769, 817	

**S**

Saga of Epic Proportions— <i>Swami Sandarshananda</i> ... .. 32, 328, 371, 415, 469, 523, 559, 610, 658, 710, 751	
Science and Religion— <i>Maria Wirth</i> ... ..	351
Science in Spirituality, The— <i>Gopal C Bhar</i> ... ..	395
Sister Nivedita— <i>Swami Vireswarananda</i> ... ..	5
Sister Nivedita— <i>Dr Aparna Basu</i> ... ..	113
Sister Nivedita and Swami Swarupananda— <i>Swami Atmajnanananda</i> ... ..	19
Sister Nivedita: A Light for and from the West— <i>Jeffery D Long</i> ... ..	106
Sister Nivedita: Offering of Grace— <i>Prema Nandakumar</i> ... ..	83
Sister Nivedita: The ‘Dedicated’ Daughter of Mother India— <i>Sadhu Prof. V Rangarajan</i> ... ..	212
Sister Nivedita: The Many-Splendoured Marvel— <i>Prof. M Sivaramkrishna</i> ... ..	279
Sister Nivedita’s Battle for Indian Ideals in America— <i>Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana</i> ... ..	58
Sister Nivedita’s Interactions with Devotees and Prominent Westerners— <i>Gopal Stavig</i> ... ..	197
Sister Nivedita’s Observations on Indian History and Culture— <i>C Jayanarayanan</i> ... ..	266
Sister Nivedita’s Unpublished Letter and Family Papers— <i>Sarada Sarkar</i> ... ..	683

Sister Nivedita's Unpublished Letters to Alberta Sturges Montagu— <i>Sarada Sarkar</i> ...	95
Swami Vivekananda's Presence in Sister Nivedita's Life— <i>Linda Prugh</i> ... ..	271

## T

This Month ... ..	296, 344, 392, 440, 488, 536, 584, 632, 680, 728, 776
Thrice Dedicated, The— <i>Pravrajika Ajayaprana</i> ... ..	55
Towards a Dharma-Based Economy— <i>Swami Atmarupananda</i> ... ..	308
Traditional Tales: Anger Should Subside ... ..	331
Traditional Tales: Garland Honour, The ... ..	667
Traditional Tales: Goddess's Blessings, The ... ..	381, 430
Traditional Tales: Humbling of Hanuman, The ... ..	815
Traditional Tales: Karma Yoga ... ..	713
Traditional Tales: Mercy is Honoured ... ..	567
Traditional Tales: Scene from the Ramayana, A ... ..	767
Traditional Tales: Shatamanyu: The Great Sacrificer ... ..	619
Traditional Tales: Strange Throne of Vikramaditya, The ... ..	478
Traditional Tales: Truth Prevails ... ..	526
Traditional Tales: Who Are You, Child? ... ..	286
Traditional Wisdom:	
Maitrayaniya Upanishad ... ..	1, 295, 343, 391, 439, 487, 535, 583, 631, 679, 727, 775

## U

Understanding India: Nivedita's Example— <i>Swami Smaranananda</i> ... ..	8
---	---

## V

'Visualising' the Invisible Prana— <i>Tara Jane Paul</i> ... ..	510
Vedanta Answers— <i>Swami Smaranananda</i> ... ..	326, 369
Voyage of Swami Vivekananda from Bombay to Kobe—	
May to June 1893: New Findings, The— <i>Swami Medhasananda</i> ... ..	299

## W

World Seen As the Field of Destiny, The— <i>Alan Jacobs</i> ... ..	639
--	-----

## Author Index

### A

#### *Ajayaprana, Pravrajika*

Thrice Dedicated, The ... ..	55
------------------------------	----

#### *Atmajnanananda, Swami*

Sister Nivedita and Swami Swarupananda ... ..	19
---	----

#### *Atmarupananda, Swami*

Drawn into the Orbit of the New Buddha ... ..	24
Towards a Dharma-Based Economy ... ..	308

## B

*Barker, Nicola and Narasimhananda, Swami*

Nicola Barker: An Interview about The Cauliflower ... .. 304

*Basu, Dr Aparna*

Sister Nivedita ... .. 113

*Beckerlegge, Gwilym*

'Irishness' of Margaret Noble/Sister Nivedita, The ... .. 118

*Bhar, Gopal C*

Science in Spirituality, The ... .. 395

*Bharati, Vijaya*

On Sister Nivedita ... .. 263

*Bharati, Lalitha*

On Sister Nivedita ... .. 265

*Bhattacharyya, Dr Sanjukta*

Myth and Mythic Themes ... .. 544

*Bidwaikar, Shruti*

Giant Dance of Shiva, The ... .. 539

## C

*Chatterjee, Arun*

God and World According to Spinoza and Vedanta ... .. 500

*Chetanananda, Swami*

Holy Mother and Sister Nivedita... .. 13

In Memoriam: Huston Smith... .. 591

Nivedita: A Great Wonder ... .. 491

## G

*Gupta, Mrs Sudeshna and Upadhyay, Dr Saroj*

Dedicated Sister and the Three Great Sons of Mother India, A ... .. 254

## H

*Harding, Elizabeth Usha*

Danger, Beauty, and God-Intoxication: A Journey to Amarnath ... .. 316

## J

*Jacobs, Alan*

World Seen As the Field of Destiny, The ... .. 639

*Jayanarayanan, C*

Sister Nivedita's Observations on Indian History and Culture ... .. 266

## K

*Kritarthananda, Swami*

Nivedita: A Blend of Strength and Softness ... .. 42

## L

*Lohani, Vinayak*

Elements in Sister Nivedita's Educational Vision ... .. 788

6 • Index



*Paul, Tara Jane*

‘Visualising’ the Invisible Prana ... .. 510

*Prabuddhaprana, Pravrajika*

Sister Nivedita’s Battle for Indian Ideals in America ... .. 58

*Prugh, Linda*

Swami Vivekananda’s Presence in Sister Nivedita’s Life ... .. 271

## R

*Ranganathananda, Swami*

Mandukya Upanishad ... .. 360, 405, 465

*Rangarajan, Sadhu Prof. V*

Sister Nivedita: The ‘Dedicated’ Daughter of Mother India ... .. 212

*Ray, Dr Anil Baran and Ray, Dr Sukanya*

Fighter Extraordinary: Sister Nivedita and Her Indian Struggles... .. 168

## S

*Sandarshananda, Swami*

Saga of Epic Proportions ... .. 32, 328, 371, 415, 469, 523, 559, 610, 658, 710, 751

*Sarkar, Sarada*

About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and

Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita... .. 779

On and About Sister Nivedita and Her Family ... .. 731

Sister Nivedita’s Unpublished Letter and Family Papers ... .. 683

Sister Nivedita’s Unpublished Letters to Alberta Sturges Montagu ... .. 95

*Sen, Siddhartha*

Reflections on Vedanta and Science ... .. 642

*Shuddhatmaprana, Pravrajika*

Breakfast with the Sisters: A Meeting of Great Minds ... .. 71

*Shuklatmananda, Swami*

Gems of Memories: Reminiscences of Swami Saradeshananda

... .. 459, 515, 551, 603, 654, 706, 739, 805

*Sivaramkrishna, Prof. M*

Review Article:

On World Religions: Diversity, Not Dissension ... .. 424

Review Article: The Cauliflower: A Novel ... .. 333

Sister Nivedita: The Many-Splendoured Marvel ... .. 279

*Smaranananda, Swami*

Understanding India: Nivedita’s Example ... .. 8

Vedanta Answers ... .. 326, 369

*Stavig, Gopal*

Sister Nivedita’s Interactions with Devotees and Prominent Westerners ... .. 197

## T

*Tyagishananda, Swami*

Essence of the Bhagavadgita and its Significance, The ... .. 347

**U***Upadhyay, Dr Saroj and Gupta, Mrs Sudeshna*

Dedicated Sister and the Three Great Sons of Mother India, A ... .. 254

**V***Vireswarananda, Swami*

Sister Nivedita ... .. 5

**W***Wenxin, Zhu*

Cultural Heritage of India, The ... .. 594

*Wirth, Maria*

Science and Religion ... .. 351

**Book Reviews**

Aitareya Upanisad—Anirvan, Trans. Gautam Dharmpal ... .. 529

All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy—

John Ó Maoilearca ... .. 622

Essay on Man, An—Alexander Pope, Ed. Tom Jones ... .. 715

Body of Truth—Harriet Brown ... .. 672

Born Translated—Rebecca L Walkowitz ... .. 671

Christo-Fiction: The Ruins of Athens and Jerusalem—

François Laruelle, Trans. Robin Mackay ... .. 625

Classical Philosophy: A History of Philosophy without Any Gaps, Volume 1—

Peter Adamson ... .. 715

Collection From Śankara's Commentaries on the Prasthāna-Traya, A—

Swami Kritarthananda ... .. 572

Concept of Non-Photography, The—François Laruelle, Trans. Robin Mackay ... .. 624

Conscious Mind, The—Zoltan Torey ... .. 338

Dictionary of Non-Philosophy—

François Laruelle, Collaborators: Tony Brachet, Gilbert Kieffer, Laurent Leroy, Daniel

Nicolet, Anne-Françoise Schmid, and Serge Valdinoci, Trans. Taylor Adkins ... .. 623

Digital Culture and Religion in Asia—

Sam Han and Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir ... .. 673

Ethics and Culture: Some Contemporary Indian Reflections Vol. 2—

Ed. Indrani Sanyal ... .. 480

Finders Keepers?—A True Story in India—Robert Arnett ... .. 669

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François Laruelle, Ed. Robin Mackay... .. 625

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A Conceptual Presentation of the Bhagavad Gītā—Uday Karanjkar ... .. 625

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J P Vaswani ... .. 575

God's Planet—Own Gingerich ... .. 572

Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience—Richard Landes... .. 480

Hindu Rashtra: Vedic Ideals in Modern Awakening —Sadhu Prof V Rangarajan ... .. 818

India Unveiled: Spirit, Tradition, People—Robert Arnett ... .. 528

Introduction to Non-Marxism—François Laruelle, Trans. Anthony Paul Smith ... .. 624

Laruelle: Against the Digital—Alexander R Galloway ... .. 623

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J N Mohanty, Eds. Tara Chatterjea, Sandhya Basu, and Amita Chatterjee ... .. 621

Moral Clarity: A Guide For Grown-Up Idealists—Susan Neiman ... .. 717

New Education Can Make the World New—J P Vaswani ... .. 434

Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History, The—

Sanjeev Sanyal ... .. 569

Philosophy and Non-Philosophy—François Laruelle, Trans. Taylor Adkins... .. 623

Philosophy of Mahakavi Bharati—Sadhu Prof. V Rangarajan ... .. 432

Photo-Fiction, A Non-Standard Aesthetics—François Laruelle, Trans. Drew S Burk ... .. 623

Ramakrishna Movement in South India: Retrospect and Prospect—

Dr Sagarika Biswas ... .. 337

Reimagining the Sacred—Eds. Richard Kearney and Jens Zimmermann ... .. 383

Saints and Sages of India: Volumes I, II, III, and IV—

K Subramaniam and S Sundaram... .. 288

Saradananda, The Bliss of Knowledge:

An Account of Swami Saradananda in the West—Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana ... .. 528

Spiritual Masters: Swami Vivekananda—Prema Nandakumar ... .. 574

Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy—

François Laruelle, Trans. Drew S Burk and Anthony Paul Smith ... .. 624

Teresa, My Love: An Imagined Life of the Saint of Avila—A Novel—

Julia Kristeva, Trans. Lorna Scott Fox ... .. 721

Theory and Practice of Mantra, The—Moo-Saeng Ghim (Gyeong Jung) ... .. 577

This Incredible Need to Believe—Julia Kristeva, Trans. Beverley Bie Brahic... .. 720

Tibetan Medicine and Your Health, The—Tove Langemyr Larsen ... .. 433

Transcendental Non-Dualism of Trika Śaivism, The—Moti Lal Pandit ... .. 669

Vivekananda's Ideas and Our Times: A Retrospect On His 150th Birth Anniversary,

Swami—Eds. Sandipan Sen, Swarup Roy, Brahmachari Subrata, Jaisankar Chattopadhyay,

and Swami Shastrajnananda ... .. 384

Walden—Henry D Thoreau, Ed. J Lyndon Shanley ... .. 817

What is A People?—

Alain Badiou, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Georges Didi-Huberman, Sadri Khiari, and

Jacques Rancière, Trans. Jody Gladding ... .. 769

## List of Reviewers

Buwa, Mangesh ... ..	338, 572, 673
Chakraborty, Nirmalya Narayan ... ..	573
Chattopadhyay, Subhasis ... ..	480, 482, 674, 715, 717, 719, 721, 770, 818
Debnath, Papiya ... ..	528
Hariharan, N ... ..	289, 433, 434, 530, 575, 577, 818
Hazra, Dr Aparajita ... ..	672
Nandakumar, Prema ... ..	384, 482, 670
Patel, Varsha ... ..	572
PB ... ..	623, 624, 625
Prabuddha Bharata, Editor ... ..	669, 722
Roy, Sumita Dr ... ..	338
Sarkar, Saikat ... ..	671
Saroj, R S ... ..	529
Sivaramkrishna, Prof. M ... ..	384, 578, 622, 626
Yaden, Melissa ... ..	434

## Manana: Book Extracts

Aboutness—Stephen Yablo ... ..	339
Being Human In A Buddhist World:	
An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet—Janet Gyatso ... ..	483
Bhāgavata Purāna, The —Eds. Ravi M Gupta And Kenneth R Valpey ... ..	435
End of The West And Other Cautionary Tales, The —Sean Meighoo ... ..	771
Future of the Brain, The —Eds. Gary Marcus and Jeremy Freeman ... ..	819
Hindu Spirituality and Virtue Politics—Vasanthi Srinivasan ... ..	675
Intimate Universal: The Hidden Porosity Among Religion, Art, Philosophy, And	
Politics, The —William Desmond ... ..	579
Philosopher: A History in Six Types, The —Justin E H Smith ... ..	531
Self, The —Eds. Constantine Sedikides and Steven J Spencer ... ..	723
Tolerance Among The Virtues—John R Bowlin ... ..	385
Toleration—Andrew Jason Cohen ... ..	627
Wisdom of Frugality: Why Less Is More—More or Less, The —Emrys Westacott ... ..	290

**Managing Editor:** Swami Tattwavidananda (January – May)

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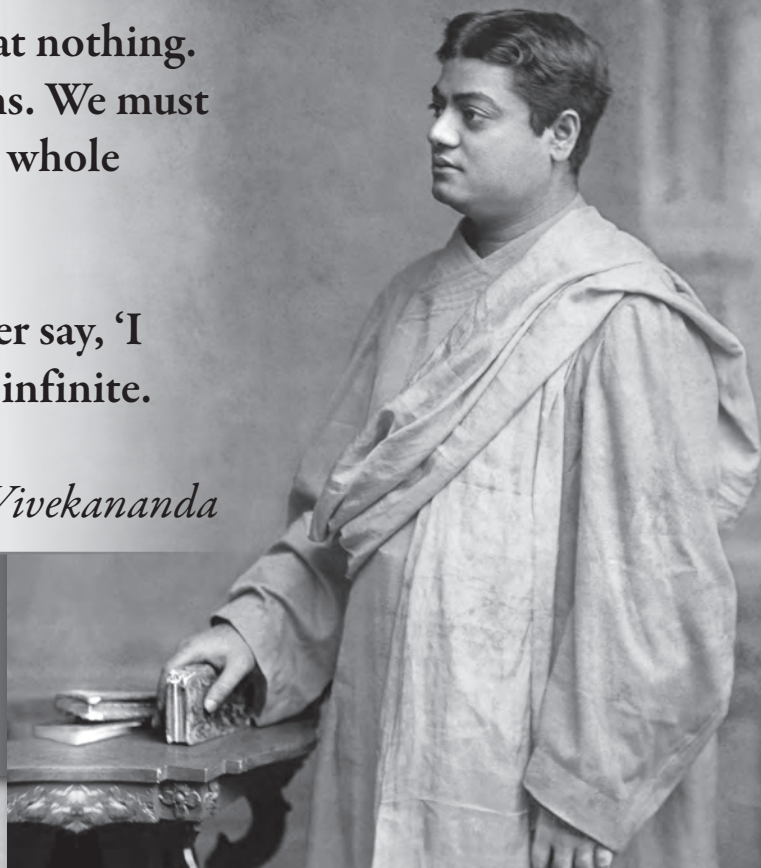
Each soul is potentially divine.  
The goal is to manifest this  
Divinity within.

Strength is life, weakness is  
death.

Fear nothing, stop at nothing.  
You will be like lions. We must  
rouse India and the whole  
world.

Never say, 'No', never say, 'I  
cannot', for you are infinite.

—*Swami Vivekananda*



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The incessant rain in Uttarakhand has brought about destruction on a large scale this year.

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Yours in the lord

**Swami Sarvatmananda**  
Secretary

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discard everything that weakens  
you, have nothing to do with it.

—Swami Vivekananda

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